

TRUE STORIES OF HOPE AND INSPIRATION

# Guidenosts

JUNE 2014

## Dolly Still Dreamin' Big

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**BE INSPIRED!**  
**Check Out  
Our Summer  
Reading  
Special  
Section p. 41**



**"ONCE I STARTED TAKING LYRICA THE  
DIABETIC NERVE PAIN STARTED SUBSIDING."**



**-TERRY, RETIRED POLICE OFFICER  
DIAGNOSED WITH DIABETIC NERVE PAIN.**

**Prescription Lyrica is not for everyone.** Tell your doctor right away about any serious allergic reaction that causes swelling of the face, mouth, lips, gums, tongue, throat, or neck or any trouble breathing, rash, hives or blisters. Lyrica may cause suicidal thoughts or actions in a very small number of people. Patients, family members or caregivers should call the doctor right away if they notice suicidal thoughts or actions, thoughts of self harm, or any unusual changes in mood or behavior. These changes may include new or worsening depression, anxiety, restlessness, trouble sleeping, panic attacks, anger, irritability, agitation, aggression, dangerous impulses or violence, or extreme increases in activity or talking. If you have suicidal thoughts or actions, do not stop Lyrica without first talking to your doctor. Lyrica may cause swelling of your hands, legs and feet. Some of the most common side effects of Lyrica are dizziness and sleepiness. Do not drive or work with machines until you know how Lyrica affects you. Other common side effects are blurry vision, weight gain, trouble concentrating, dry mouth, and feeling "high." Also, tell your doctor right away about muscle pain along with feeling sick and

**LYRICA®**  
PREGABALIN ©  
capsules



Diabetes damages  
nerves which  
may cause pain.



Artist  
depiction

Lyrica is FDA  
approved to treat  
Diabetic Nerve Pain.

Diabetic Nerve Pain (or pain from Diabetic Peripheral Neuropathy) is characterized by shooting, burning, pins and needles symptoms.

**Lyrica provides effective pain relief so patients feel better.\***

Some patients also had a significant reduction of pain in as early as one week. And, Lyrica is not a narcotic.\*\*

**Ask your doctor about Lyrica today.**

\*Individual results may vary. \*\*Those who have had a drug or alcohol problem may be more likely to misuse Lyrica.

We asked Terry to tell us about his experience with Lyrica.  
To hear Terry's story visit [Lyrica.com](http://Lyrica.com).

**Get specific treatment for Diabetic Nerve Pain.**

feverish, or any changes in your eyesight including blurry vision or any skin sores if you have diabetes. You may have a higher chance of swelling, hives or gaining weight if you are also taking certain diabetes or high blood pressure medicines. Do not drink alcohol while taking Lyrica. You may have more dizziness and sleepiness if you take Lyrica with alcohol, narcotic pain medicines, or medicines for anxiety. If you have had a drug or alcohol problem, you may be more likely to misuse Lyrica. Tell your doctor if you are planning to father a child. Talk with your doctor before you stop taking Lyrica or any other prescription medication.

*Please see Important Risk Information for Lyrica on the following pages.*

To learn more visit [www.lyrica.com](http://www.lyrica.com) or call toll-free  
1-888-9-LYRICA (1-888-959-7422).

**You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit [www.FDA.gov/medwatch](http://www.FDA.gov/medwatch) or call 1-800-FDA-1088.**

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## IMPORTANT FACTS



(LEER-i-kah)

### IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION ABOUT LYRICA

**LYRICA may cause serious, even life threatening, allergic reactions.**

Stop taking LYRICA and call your doctor right away if you have any signs of a serious allergic reaction:

- Swelling of your face, mouth, lips, gums, tongue, throat or neck
- Have any trouble breathing
- Rash, hives (raised bumps) or blisters

**Like other antiepileptic drugs, LYRICA may cause suicidal thoughts or actions in a very small number of people, about 1 in 500.**

Call your doctor right away if you have any symptoms, especially if they are new, worse or worry you, including:

- suicidal thoughts or actions
- new or worse depression
- new or worse anxiety
- feeling agitated or restless
- panic attacks
- trouble sleeping
- new or worse irritability
- acting aggressive, being angry, or violent
- acting on dangerous impulses
- an extreme increase in activity and talking
- other unusual changes in behavior or mood

**If you have suicidal thoughts or actions, do not stop LYRICA without first talking to your doctor.**

**LYRICA may cause swelling of your hands, legs and feet.**

This swelling can be a serious problem with people with heart problems.

**LYRICA may cause dizziness or sleepiness.**

Do not drive a car, work with machines, or do other dangerous things until you know how LYRICA affects you. Ask your doctor when it is okay to do these things.

### ABOUT LYRICA

**LYRICA is a prescription medicine used in adults 18 years and older to treat:**

- Pain from damaged nerves that happens with diabetes or that follows healing of shingles, or spinal cord injury.
- Partial seizures when taken together with other seizure medicines
- Fibromyalgia (pain all over your body)

**Who should NOT take LYRICA:**

- Anyone who is allergic to anything in LYRICA

### BEFORE STARTING LYRICA

Tell your doctor about all your medical conditions, including if you:

- Have had depression, mood problems or suicidal thoughts or behavior
- Have or had kidney problems or dialysis
- Have heart problems, including heart failure
- Have a bleeding problem or a low blood platelet count
- Have abused prescription medicines, street drugs or alcohol in the past
- Have ever had swelling of your face, mouth, tongue, lips, gums, neck, or throat (angioedema)
- Plan to father a child. It is not known if problems seen in animal studies can happen in humans.
- Are pregnant, plan to become pregnant or are breastfeeding.

It is not known if LYRICA will harm your unborn baby. You and your doctor should decide whether you should take LYRICA or breast-feed, but you should not do both.

Tell your doctor about all your medicines. Include over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. LYRICA and other medicines may affect each other causing side effects. Especially tell your doctor if you take:

### BEFORE STARTING LYRICA, continued

- Angiotensin converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors. You may have a higher chance for swelling and hives.
- Avandia\* (rosiglitazone)\*, Avandamet\* (rosiglitazone and metformin)\* or Actos\* (pioglitazone)\*\* for diabetes. You may have a higher chance of weight gain or swelling of your hands or feet.
- Narcotic pain medicines (such as oxycodone), tranquilizers or medicines for anxiety (such as lorazepam). You may have a higher chance for dizziness and sleepiness.
- Any medicines that make you sleepy

### POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF LYRICA

LYRICA may cause serious side effects, including:

- See "Important Safety Information About LYRICA."
- Muscle problems, pain, soreness or weakness along with feeling sick and fever
- Eyesight problems including blurry vision
- Weight gain. Weight gain may affect control of diabetes and can be serious for people with heart problems.
- Feeling "high"

If you have any of these symptoms, tell your doctor right away.

The most common side effects of LYRICA are:

- Dizziness
- Blurry vision
- Weight gain
- Sleepiness
- Trouble concentrating
- Swelling of hands and feet
- Dry mouth

If you have diabetes, you should pay extra attention to your skin while taking LYRICA.

### HOW TO TAKE LYRICA

**Do:**

- Take LYRICA exactly as your doctor tells you. Your doctor will tell you how much to take and when to take it. Take LYRICA at the same times each day.
- Take LYRICA with or without food.

**Don't:**

- Drive a car or use machines if you feel dizzy or sleepy while taking LYRICA.
- Drink alcohol or use other medicines that make you sleepy while taking LYRICA.
- Change the dose or stop LYRICA suddenly. If you stop taking LYRICA suddenly, you may have headaches, nausea, diarrhea, trouble sleeping, increased sweating, or you may feel anxious. If you have epilepsy, you may have seizures more often.
- Start any new medicines without first talking to your doctor.

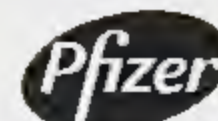
### NEED MORE INFORMATION?

- Ask your doctor or pharmacist. This is only a brief summary of important information.
- Go to [www.lyrica.com](http://www.lyrica.com) or call 1-866-459-7422 (1-866-4LYRICA).



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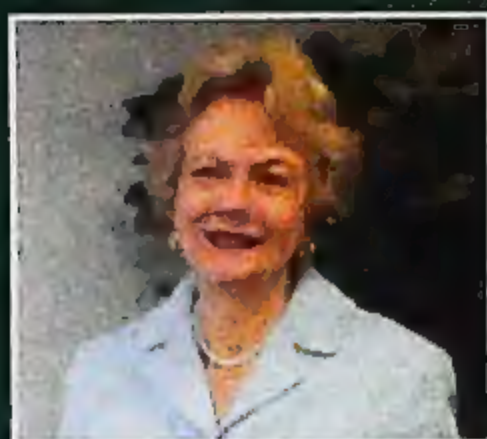
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# Guideposts

presents

## Hosted by:



**Margaret Peale Everett**  
Guideposts Board Member  
Daughter of  
Dr. Norman Vincent Peale

*"My favorite part of these trips is getting to know Guideposts readers like you. Come and explore the beauty of Ireland and create lasting memories and friendships."*

## Shades of Ireland

Dublin, Irish Evening, Kilkenny, Waterford Crystal, Blarney Castle, Jaunting Car Ride, Ring of Kerry, Killarney, Farm Visit, Limerick, Cliffs of Moher, Galway, Castle Stay

Travel provided by

**collette**

Our travel partner Collette seamlessly handles all the details of your Ireland travel experience. From finding the perfect hotel to blending immersive cultural inclusions with the must-see's, they do it all. Join us for an adventure that is sure to bring life-changing moments, new friends and a wealth of memories. This is your chance to enjoy Ireland's hospitable culture and its natural beauty.

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- Behold the spectacular beauty of the Cliffs of Moher
- Overnight on the grounds of a castle and experience old Ireland at its finest

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**For more information, contact Collette at 855.366.8687**

\*Rate is per person, land only, and based on double occupancy. Call for air rates from your gateway.  
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## EDITOR'S NOTE

### Ireland, Anyone?



**E**ver since I got back from the Guideposts Reflections of Italy tour, people have been asking me what the most inspiring thing about the trip was. That's an impossible question to answer. How do you compare the ancient Pantheon with the dome of St. Peter's, conceived by Michelangelo? The magnificent ruins of imperial Rome with the Renaissance architecture of Brunelleschi? The pizza in Rome with the pizza in Venice?

In other words, it is not fair to compare one great timeless thing with another, and I wouldn't know where to even begin. I can say with confidence, though, that the 62 GUIDEPOSTS readers who joined Maggie Peale Everett and me for our 10-day coach tour through Italy told us it was the adventure of a lifetime, a dream come true. We saw Rome and Florence. We visited the Basilica of St. Francis in beautiful Assisi and trod the same cobblestones the beloved saint did. We sipped espresso in Siena and sampled chocolate in Perugia, saw the Duomo in Florence and gondolaed down the Grand Canal in Venice.

But I will tell you the best thing about the trip: traveling with GUIDEPOSTS readers and supporters. And that was a feeling everyone had. We weren't simply a group of strangers traveling together. We had a spiritual affinity. We shared our stories and our faith. We became friends. And we had a lot of fun.

Don't feel left out. We have another inspiring trip planned with our travel partners at Collette: a coach tour through the Emerald Isle October 27 to November 5, hosted by Maggie Peale Everett. From Dublin to the Ring of Kerry, Blarney Castle to the Cliffs of Moher, our Shades of Ireland tour will be filled with adventure and life-changing moments. Call (855) 366-8687 for more information.

Meanwhile, I've posted a slide show featuring some of our most memorable moments from Italy. Follow the link below.

**Edward Grinnan**  
Editor-in-Chief



See Edward's photos of his trip at [guideposts.org/italytour](http://guideposts.org/italytour)

JULIE BROWN



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TRUE STORIES OF HOPE AND INSPIRATION

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GUIDEPOSTS, a nonprofit organization, touches millions of lives every day through products and services that inspire, encourage and uplift. Our magazines, books, prayer network and outreach programs help people connect their faith-filled values to their daily lives. To learn more, visit [guideposts.org/about](http://guideposts.org/about) or [guidepostsfoundation.org](http://guidepostsfoundation.org).



GOT A STORY? SUBMIT it to [guideposts.org/tellusyourstory](http://guideposts.org/tellusyourstory) or MAIL it to GUIDEPOSTS, 110 William Street, Suite 901, New York, NY 10038

COVER PHOTOGRAPHED FOR GUIDEPOSTS BY DAVID MCCLISTER; THIS PAGE, KATE BALDWIN

LEFT: JENNA STAMM; MIDDLE: JORDAN HOLLENDER; RIGHT: TAMARA REYNOLDS



## What's New on Guideposts.org

### Dolly's Secrets to Success

Dolly Parton (page 32) has done it all—singer, actress, businesswoman, philanthropist. Yet she's still setting new goals for herself. She shares the keys to achieving your dreams in our exclusive video at [guideposts.org/dolly](http://guideposts.org/dolly).

### A Summer Prayer

Sunshine, flowers in bloom, days at the shore. Celebrate the beauty of summer with our meditation at [guideposts.org/summerprayer](http://guideposts.org/summerprayer).



### Don't Forget Dad!

Father's Day is June 15, and we're marking the occasion by sharing 10 inspiring stories that pay homage to dear old Dad! Go to [guideposts.org/fathersday](http://guideposts.org/fathersday).

### Cooking Light

Check out our collection of light and refreshing recipes, all of them perfect for the warm and lazy summer days ahead. To find just the right dish to fit every occasion, go to [guideposts.org/summerrecipes](http://guideposts.org/summerrecipes).

## Guideposts®

GUIDEPOSTS is a monthly inspirational, interfaith, nonprofit magazine written by people from all walks of life. Its articles help readers achieve their maximum personal and spiritual potential.

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## PASS IT ON

PEOPLE HELPING PEOPLE

### GREAT BOOKS

A good book can change your life. I know because *Embraced by the Light*, by Betty J. Eadie, changed mine. Her experience showed me that God is with us at the most frightening times and helped me overcome a crippling fear of flying.

A few months ago I met a woman enrolled at Amethyst House, a local long-term addiction-treatment program. She was working hard to better herself so she wouldn't lose her children. I found myself thinking, *She should have a book that inspires her as much as Embraced by the Light inspired me*. Everyone in the program could likely use some real-life inspiration.

I put out the word that I was collecting inspirational nonfiction books to donate to Amethyst House. There was such a great response that we're building a small library there. We're accepting all types of positive books now—even children's books the residents can share with their kids.

The desire to change has to come from within, but the motivation to keep working to change—that can be inspired by a good book.

**JILL BASOM**

Hilliard, Ohio

For more information on the book drive, visit [maggiemaysgifts.com](http://maggiemaysgifts.com).

## SERENITY



### CHILDREN'S PRAYER

Back when my four kids were little, I wanted to make faith a part of their everyday lives. But the traditional prayer "Now I lay me down to sleep..." made me uneasy. I didn't want my children to lie in bed scared, wondering about the line "If I should die before I wake."

I did a little research into other versions and then had an idea—why not write my own? I came up with a bedtime prayer that's a bit more upbeat:

*God love you and keep you all  
through the night*

*And guide and direct you all the  
days of your life.*

*May the love of Jesus shine  
through your smiling eyes*

ILLUSTRATIONS BY PENELOPE DULLAGHAN

ISTOCK





*And laughing voices.  
And may you witness to his love  
each and every day,  
In everything you do and in  
everything you say.*

*In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*

The prayer's become a family tradition. It's the one my nine grandchildren say at night. One of my sons, a pastor, even shared it with his congregation! Knowing that this prayer means so much to them is one of God's unexpected delights.

**BOBBI WERKHEISER**  
Beaver, Pennsylvania

#### PAW FRIENDLY

**A**s a firefighter and American Red Cross emergency responder, I've seen people worry more about their pets than about their own safety. That's why I started an animal-focused emergency organization, Red Paw. We respond to calls in Philadelphia and four neighboring counties.



KNOW OF A GOOD ACT YOU'D LIKE TO SHARE WITH US? E-MAIL us at [pio@guideposts.org](mailto:pio@guideposts.org) or WRITE to GUIDEPOSTS, Pass It On Dept., 110 William Street, Suite 901, New York, NY 10038.

But in rural areas, when we needed a veterinary emergency room, we often had to call our office and have someone do an Internet search to find the nearest one.

Then this winter, the Red Cross released the Pet First Aid smart-phone app for dog and cat owners. It's been a lifesaver. Just two taps and we have a list of animal hospitals—and pet-friendly hotels for families who have lost their homes. It can also help people create disaster plans, track their pets' health and keep a list of medications. And, of course, it gives first-aid instructions for common situations.

As an emergency responder and pet owner, I'd give this app four stars. Or should I say, four paws?

**JEN LEARY**

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

For more information or to download the app, go to [redcross.org/mobile-apps/pet-first-aid-app](http://redcross.org/mobile-apps/pet-first-aid-app).



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# “THE UP SIDE®

QUOTES FROM TODAY'S POSITIVE THINKERS



*“Being a good dad is all about moments—moments to teach, moments to treasure. It’s about the hard moments when we think we haven’t gotten through to our kids, and the wonderful moments when we realize we have.”*

**JIM DALY**, from his book *The Good Dad: Becoming the Father You Were Meant to Be*

*“Never hold on to anything tighter than you’re holding on to God.”*

submitted by GUIDEPOSTS reader **JEFFREY DeMENNA**, of Phoenix, Arizona

*“Accept—then act. Whatever the present moment contains, accept it as if you had chosen it. Always work with it, not against it.”*

**ECKHART TOLLE**, from his book *A New Earth: Awakening to Your Life's Purpose*

**W**ork hard and be kind and amazing things will happen.”

TV host **CONAN O'BRIEN**, from the commencement speech he gave at Dartmouth College in 2011



**SEND AN UPLIFTING QUOTE** from a newsmaker or yourself to [upside@guideposts.org](mailto:upside@guideposts.org) or GUIDEPOSTS, The Up Side, 110 William Street, Suite 901, New York, NY 10038.

*“What I thought was an end turned out to be a middle.”*

**TONY HOAGLAND**, winner of the Mark Twain award for poetry, from his poem “A Color of the Sky”

*“If someone says: ‘That’s impossible,’ you should understand it as: ‘According to my very limited experience and narrow understanding of reality, that’s very unlikely.’”*

**PAUL BUCHHEIT**, creator and lead developer of Gmail

*“Thank you, God, for this good life, and forgive us if we do not love it enough.”*

radio host **GARRISON KEILLOR**

*“It’s okay to visit Memory Lane, just don’t live there.”*

submitted by GUIDEPOSTS reader **JEFFREY LORIMER**, of Lanoka Harbor, New Jersey

*“Life is a series of commas, not periods.”*

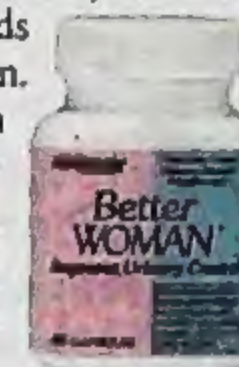
actor **MATTHEW MCCONAUGHEY**

## Thanks to BetterWOMAN, I'm winning the battle for Bladder Control



Frequent nighttime trips to the bathroom, embarrassing leaks and the inconvenience of constantly searching for rest rooms in public – for years, I struggled with bladder control problems. After trying expensive medications with horrible side effects, ineffective exercises and undignified pads and diapers, I was ready to resign myself to a life of bladder leaks, isolation and depression. But then I tried **BetterWOMAN**.

When I first saw the ad for BetterWOMAN, I was skeptical. So many products claim they can set you free from leaks, frequency and worry, only to deliver disappointment. When I finally tried BetterWOMAN, I found that it actually works! It changed my life. Even my friends have noticed that I'm a new person. And because it's all natural, I can enjoy the results without the worry of dangerous side effects. Thanks to BetterWOMAN, I finally fought bladder control problems and I won!



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[www.BetterWOMANnow.com](http://www.BetterWOMANnow.com)

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By **LISA LESHAW**  
Coram, New York

**O**NE MINUTE, I WAS A 31-YEAR-old part-time music teacher. The next, I'd turned into one of my pre-K students, hyperventilating and sobbing uncontrollably, wishing Mom and Dad would come rescue me. That's what claustrophobia will do to you.

My parents were home on Long Island, though, and I was trapped in an elevator in a Manhattan high-rise. All alone. This was exactly what I'd been afraid of when my best friend asked me to come see her new apartment. Unless I wanted to climb 15 flights of stairs, this metal coffin was my only way up. So I said a prayer and went for it. I was doing okay...until the elevator car jerked and then came to a halt—between floors. What a cruel trick for God to play on me.

I tried taking deep, cleansing

breaths. Feeling faint, I sank to the floor and tucked my head between my knees. *Close your eyes, go to your happy place.* Maybe because the next day was Father's Day, I thought back to how Dad comforted me when I was a little girl. "Catch the kiss!" he'd say. He'd pucker his lips, blow a kiss and laugh as I ran around our living room, grabbing handfuls of air, trying to hold on to the invisible. Had I ever told him what those moments meant to me? I might never get the chance. Not if I suffocated in here...or if the cable snapped and I plummeted to my death.

I opened my eyes. Blinking away my tears, I spied a little door below the button panel. *Emergency Phone.* Thank God! I snatched up the receiver. "I'm stuck in here! Get me out, please!" At the very least, maybe they could relay my last words to my family...

"We're working on it, ma'am," a voice responded. "I know you're upset, but the longer we stay on the phone, the longer it will take us to free you."

I hung up immediately.

I rummaged through my purse for a tissue. My hand bumped something hard. The mini tape recorder I used for my classes. *Make this time count, I thought. Tell everyone you love what you've always wanted to tell them.* I held the microphone end to my lips and pressed *Record*. I started with Dad.

"Dad, I remember you at the playground, how you stood at the end of the giant blue slide, waiting to catch me.

I'm all grown up now, but I continue to count on you to be there for me when I'm scared. You never let me down. In my mind, you'll always be the giant that met me at the bottom of the slide...and I'll always be your little girl. Happy Father's Day, Dad. I love you."

*Clang!* What was that? The cable snapping? A panicked heartbeat later, the elevator doors slid open. An EMT was waiting. I nearly leaped into his arms. He looked me over and led me downstairs to the lobby. I buzzed my friend's apartment. She came down with some photos of the place. "I'm sorry," she said. "But really, what were the odds this would happen to you?"

I told my parents all about it when I saw them on Father's Day. Then I handed Dad my gift. He looked confused. "A tape recorder?" he asked.

"Just press *Play*," I said.

He listened to my message. "This is the best gift you could have given me," he said. Now he was the one blinking away tears.

Little did I know that that would be our last Father's Day together. Dad was diagnosed with leukemia and succumbed swiftly. It took a while before I could bring myself to sort through the bag of belongings he'd brought with him to the hospital. Some magazines. His father's watch. At the bottom, I was surprised to find the tape recorder I'd given him. I rewound the tape and pressed *Play*. That time in the elevator had been terrifying, but

it gave me the chance to tell Dad how I felt before it was too late. I thought of my words comforting him in his final days, the way he'd always comforted me. *Thank you, Lord, for that.*

My message ended. But then there was the sound of someone softly clearing his throat. Dad's voice came next, steady and clear: "Dear Princess. When you find this recording I will no longer be here. Know that I love you more than life itself. You are the greatest blessing a father could hope for. When you close your eyes, listen for my voice and know you are never alone. I am with you always." Just before the recording clicked off, I heard the unmistakable sound of him blowing a kiss.

I reached up with both hands and clasped them together in the air. Catching something invisible. Something that had never felt more real. ©

*It was  
my father's  
last gift.*





## WHAT PRAYER CAN DO®

POWER IN OUR DAY-TO-DAY LIVES

### LONG-DISTANCE COVERAGE

**B**ack in Portland, Oregon, I'd had it all—a solid career as a freelance artist and steady acting work in local theater, TV and film. But I'd thrown it all away for dreams of Hollywood. Three years in and that dream was turning into a nightmare.

My parents, back East, didn't need to know my problems. So when I turned on my computer to Skype with them one night I made sure to smile as usual when we talked about how things were going. "I see you still have a roof over your head," Dad said, pointing to the apartment he could see behind me on the screen.

"Oh, this is just a backdrop," I joked. "I'm really out on the streets."

Dad laughed, but then he got serious. "Tell us the truth—how are your finances holding out?"

My brave front crumbled. I told my parents everything—how hard it was to get auditions, that I'd found some art jobs, but they weren't enough to cover my rent.

Dad insisted on sending a check. Mom thought I needed something more. "What would you think about praying together over the phone?" she said. "Every day for thirty days, just to see what it can do."

In all my time in L.A. I'd never really asked God for help, not specifically. Now I was desperate. I agreed to the plan. At first Mom did most of the praying. I mainly cried. But as I listened to her talk to God about my

problems in detail, I started to get the hang of it. "Tell God everything," Mom said.

No, I didn't immediately land a role, but I didn't feel so hopeless anymore. I had my family and I had God, who I could connect to anytime through prayer.



**RESULTS** Lauren was waiting for her big break.

Then, just before the month was up, I got a call from a friend. He worked on the *Ellen* show. "We're doing a skit and you'd be perfect for it," he said. The next day I was in front of the cameras and loving every minute of it. Back home, Mom and Dad watched the results of our prayers on TV.

Maybe I'll never figure out Hollywood. But I've figured out prayer.

**LAUREN BAIR**

Los Angeles, California

Send in this card  
to get more information.



**NEED PRAYER?** VISIT [ourprayer.org](http://ourprayer.org), CALL (203) 778-8063 or WRITE to Guideposts Prayer Fellowship, P.O. Box 5813, Harlan, IA 51593-1313. To become a prayer volunteer, VISIT [ourprayervolunteer.org](http://ourprayervolunteer.org) or CALL (800) 935-0158 x0420.



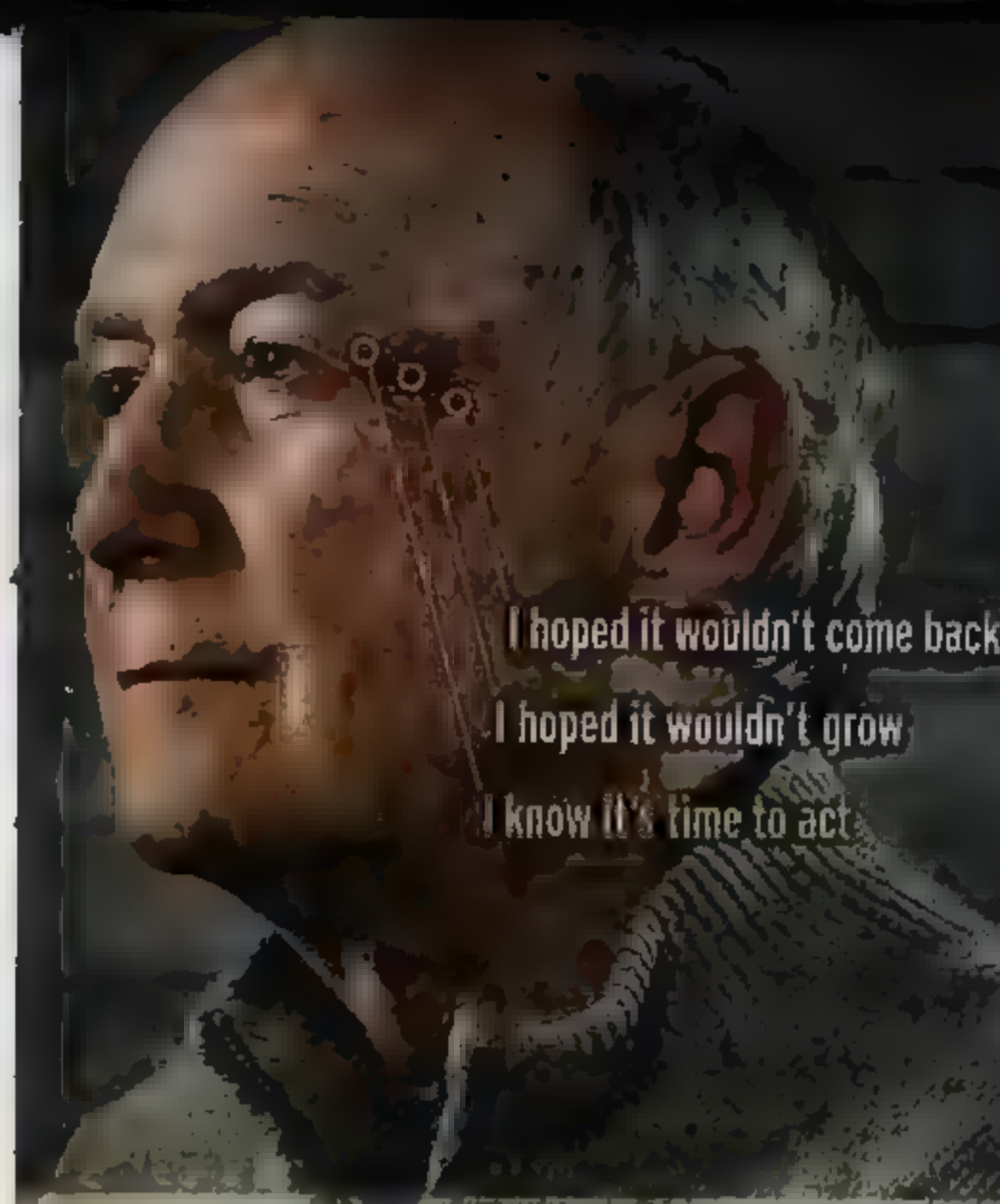
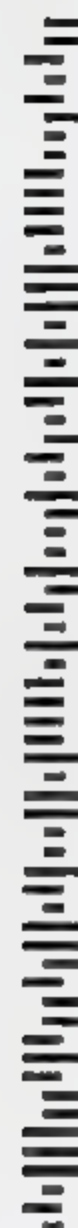
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You can also call (855) 7-ERIVEDGE (855-737-4833) or  
visit [Erivedgesupport.com](http://Erivedgesupport.com).

Please see the accompanying Medication Guide  
on the following pages for additional important  
safety information.

If you don't have prescription coverage or can't  
afford your medicine, we may be able to help.  
Visit [genentech-access.com/erivedge/patients](http://genentech-access.com/erivedge/patients) or call  
(888) 249-4918 to learn more. Capsule shown not actual size.

**Genentech**

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**Indication**

Erivedge® (vismodegib) capsule is a prescription medicine  
used to treat adults with a type of skin cancer, called basal  
cell carcinoma, that has spread to other parts of the body  
or that has come back after surgery or that your healthcare  
provider decides cannot be treated with surgery or radiation.

**Important Safety Information**

What is the most important information I should know about Erivedge?

- Erivedge can cause your baby to die before it is born (be stillborn) or cause your baby to have severe birth defects.
- For females who can become pregnant, talk with your healthcare provider about the risks of Erivedge to your unborn child. Your healthcare provider should do a pregnancy test within 7 days before you start taking Erivedge to find out if you are pregnant. Avoid pregnancy by using highly effective birth control before starting Erivedge and continue during treatment and for 7 months after your last dose. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you have unprotected sex or think that your birth control has failed.
- For males, always use a condom with a spermicide during sex with female partners while you are taking Erivedge and for 7 months after your last dose, even if you have had a vasectomy.
- Tell your healthcare provider right away if you or your female partner could be pregnant or thinks she is pregnant while you are taking Erivedge.
- Before taking Erivedge, tell your healthcare provider if you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant or if you are breast-feeding or plan to breast-feed.

**Exposure to Erivedge during pregnancy**

Pregnant women are encouraged to participate in a program that collects information about exposure and the effects on the mother and her unborn child by calling the Genentech Adverse Event Line at (888) 835-2555.

**What should I avoid while taking Erivedge?**

Do not give blood or blood products during treatment with Erivedge and for 7 months after your last dose.

**What are the possible side effects of Erivedge?**

The most common side effects of Erivedge are:

- |   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| • Muscle spasms                               | • Nausea             |
| • Hair loss                                   | • Diarrhea           |
| • Change in how things taste or loss of taste | • Decreased appetite |
| • Weight loss                                 | • Constipation       |
| • Tiredness                                   | • Vomiting           |
|   | • Joint aches        |

These are not all of the possible side effects of Erivedge. For more information, ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist.

Because everyone is different, it is not possible to predict what side effects any one person will have or how severe they may be. Tell your healthcare provider if you have any side effect that bothers you or that does not go away.

You may report side effects to the FDA at (800) FDA-1088 or [www.fda.gov/medwatch](http://www.fda.gov/medwatch). You may also report side effects to Genentech at (888) 835-2555.

Please see the full Prescribing Information, including serious side effects, at [Erivedge.com](http://Erivedge.com).



## MEDICATION GUIDE

### ERIVEDGE® (EH-rih-vej) (vismodegib) capsule

Read this Medication Guide before you start taking ERIVEDGE and each time you get a refill. There may be new information. This Medication Guide does not take the place of talking with your healthcare provider about your medical condition or your treatment.

#### What is the most important information I should know about ERIVEDGE?

**ERIVEDGE can cause your baby to die before it is born (be stillborn) or cause your baby to have severe birth defects.**

For females who can become pregnant:

- You should talk with your healthcare provider about the risks of ERIVEDGE to your unborn child.
- Your healthcare provider should do a pregnancy test within 7 days before you start taking ERIVEDGE to find out if you are pregnant.
- In order to avoid pregnancy, you should start using highly effective birth control before you start ERIVEDGE, and continue to use highly effective birth control during treatment, and for 7 months after your last dose of ERIVEDGE. Talk with your healthcare provider about what birth control method is right for you during this time.
- Talk to your healthcare provider right away if you have unprotected sex or if you think that your birth control has failed.
- Tell your healthcare provider right away if you become pregnant or think that you may be pregnant.

For males:

- You should always use a condom with a spermicide, even if you have had a vasectomy, during sex with female partners while you are taking ERIVEDGE and for 2 months after your last dose to protect your female partner from being exposed to ERIVEDGE.

- Tell your healthcare provider right away if your partner becomes pregnant or thinks she is pregnant while you are taking ERIVEDGE.

#### Exposure to ERIVEDGE during pregnancy:

If you think that you or your female partner may have been exposed to ERIVEDGE during pregnancy, talk to your healthcare provider right away. Pregnant women are encouraged to participate in a program that collects information about exposure to ERIVEDGE during pregnancy, and the effects on the mother and her unborn child. This program is called the ERIVEDGE pregnancy pharmacovigilance program. You may participate in this program by calling the Genentech Adverse Event Line at 1-888-835-2555.

#### What is ERIVEDGE?

ERIVEDGE is a prescription medicine used to treat adults with a type of skin cancer, called basal cell carcinoma, that has spread to other parts of the body or that has come back after surgery or that your healthcare provider decides cannot be treated with surgery or radiation.

It is not known if ERIVEDGE is safe and effective in children.

#### What should I tell my healthcare provider before taking ERIVEDGE?

Before taking ERIVEDGE, tell your healthcare provider if you:

- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. See "What is the most important information I should know about ERIVEDGE?"

- are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed.

It is not known if ERIVEDGE passes into your breast milk. You and your healthcare provider should decide if you will take ERIVEDGE or breastfeed. You should not do both.

**Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take**, including prescription and non-prescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements.

Know the medicines you take. Keep a list of them to show your healthcare provider and pharmacist when you get a new medicine.

#### How should I take ERIVEDGE?

- Take ERIVEDGE exactly as your healthcare provider tells you.
- You can take ERIVEDGE with or without food.
- Swallow ERIVEDGE capsules whole. Do not open or crush the capsules.
- Take ERIVEDGE one time each day.
- If you miss a dose, skip the missed dose. Just take your next scheduled dose.

#### What should I avoid while taking ERIVEDGE?

- Do not donate blood or blood products while you are taking ERIVEDGE and for 7 months after your last dose.

#### What are the possible side effects of ERIVEDGE?

**ERIVEDGE can cause serious side effects, including:**

- See "What is the most important information I should know about ERIVEDGE?"

The most common side effects of ERIVEDGE are:

- |   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| • muscle spasms                               | • nausea             |
| • hair loss                                   | • diarrhea           |
| • change in how things taste or loss of taste | • decreased appetite |
| • weight loss                                 | • constipation       |
| • tiredness                                   | • vomiting           |
|   | • joint aches        |

Tell your healthcare provider if you have any side effect that bothers you or that does not go away.

These are not all the possible side effects of ERIVEDGE. For more information, ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist.

Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

You may also report side effects to Genentech, Inc. at 1-888-835-2555.

#### How should I store ERIVEDGE?

- Store ERIVEDGE at room temperature between 68°F to 77°F (20°C to 25°C).

**Keep ERIVEDGE and all medicines out of the reach of children.**

#### General information about ERIVEDGE

Medicines are sometimes prescribed for purposes other than those listed in a Medication Guide. Do not use ERIVEDGE for a condition for which it was not prescribed. Do not give ERIVEDGE to other people, even if they have the same symptoms that you have. It may harm them.

This Medication Guide summarizes the most important information about ERIVEDGE. If you would like more information, ask your healthcare provider. You can ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist for the FDA-approved information about ERIVEDGE that is written for healthcare professionals. For more information, call 1-855-737-4833 or visit [www.erivedge.com](http://www.erivedge.com)

#### What are the ingredients in ERIVEDGE?

Active ingredient: vismodegib; Inactive ingredients: microcrystalline cellulose, lactose monohydrate, sodium lauryl sulfate, povidone, sodium starch glycolate, talc, magnesium stearate (non bovine). The capsule shell contains gelatin, titanium dioxide, red iron oxide, and black iron oxide. The black printing ink contains shellac and black iron oxide.

This Medication Guide has been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

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# The Liberian Lone Stars

*How enemies became teammates*

By AUBREY LETHBRIDGE

Brooklyn, New York

**I**SAT ON A MAKESHIFT WOODEN bench on the sidelines of the soccer field, my camera bag slung over my shoulder. Player number 14—his red-and-white Liberia jersey bright in the sunlight—kicked the ball to a teammate across the stretch of sand they used as a field. It was like any other soccer game, except the players on this field were all amputees.

Men on crutches shooting goals. Goalies blocking shots with one arm. I'd flown to Liberia to make a documentary about the Lone Stars, Liberia's amputee soccer team. My first attempt at a feature-length film. I'd quit my job to do this project. But after three days of sitting on the edge of the field, I wondered if I'd made a huge mistake. No one on

the team seemed interested in talking.

They paid zero attention to me or to Evan, my friend and collaborator. We might as well have been invisible.

"Maybe they're just focused on the game," Evan suggested. So we waited for a pause in the action, then tried to break the ice. We explained how we'd read about the Lone Stars, how we wanted to show the world what they do. "Your story is inspiring," I said.

The players stared at us, their expressions giving nothing away, then crutched back onto the field. My heart sank. We'd dropped everything to be here, and these guys wanted nothing to do with us. Why?

Had I really thought I could do this?



COURTESY AUBREY LETHBRIDGE

I hadn't trained to be a filmmaker. I was a philosophy major in college. But film was my passion. I'd shot a few short pieces and posted them on YouTube, and after graduation I found work at a small production studio in New York. Meanwhile, friends who'd studied film had big-time connections and were already making movies of their own. I wanted to do that too. But what would my movies be about? I wanted to do something meaningful.

Then I read a book about soccer in Africa and came across a passage about the Lone Stars, a group of men maimed in Liberia's bloody civil war. Improbably, they'd come together and

**CHAMPIONS** For their attitude as much as their athleticism

formed a team. They'd competed in the biennial Cup of African Nations Amputee Football championship and in 2009 they'd won. I wondered how they could play at that level on crutches. I poked around online to find out more.

The members of the Lone Stars had vastly different histories, all of them violent. Some were ex-soldiers who had lost their limbs in combat. Others were innocent victims caught in the cross-fire. Society shunned them because of their injuries. Now they were champions. Incredible. How had they moved



## POSITIVE PEOPLE

beyond the violence and hatred of their past? How had they avoided the trap of bitterness and become teammates? God was moving in these men's lives in a way that was truly inspiring. It was a story the world needed to hear.

"We have to do it," Evan said when I mentioned making a documentary.

"But where are we going to get the money?" I asked. We'd have to quit our jobs, borrow cameras and somehow scrape the money together to cover initial costs, like our plane tickets. If the project picked up steam, maybe we could do a fund-raising campaign. We'd have to get the team's cooperation. The more I thought about the Lone Stars, the more I wanted to tell their story. Evan and I cashed in our savings, maxed out our credit cards and arrived in Monrovia, Liberia's capital, full of hope. And naiveté, as it turned out.

**A**FTER THREE DAYS WATCHING on the sidelines, I had to face facts: This had all been one giant mistake. The Lone Stars weren't interested. I'd have to crawl home empty-handed. I felt like such a failure. At one point, the ball rolled out of bounds just a few feet away from us. When I went to kick it back, a player scooped it up without even looking at me.

We needed a way to get through to them. The next day Evan and I brought the team fresh water, a rare commodity in Liberia. The men thanked us, then went right back to playing. Nothing. *God, we can't go home like this. We came*

*all this way. You've got to help us out!*

After practice, one player sauntered over to our bench. Number 14. He flashed a tentative smile.

"My name is Richard," he said, holding out his hand. "Thank you for the water. You've been sitting out here for days. What do you guys want from us?"

I told him about my love of soccer and my fascination with their team. My belief that the world needed to know their story.

Richard laughed. "We've talked to journalists before. They take what they want and then disappear. What makes you different?"

I fumbled for words. Who were we, a pair of 20-something kids? Evan was silent too. "Look, we're not journalists," I said finally. "We borrowed money just to get here because we think you have a great story. That's all we've got."

He paused and looked us over, considering. Then he nodded. "Come tomorrow," he said, and walked away.

The Lone Stars finally gave us permission to film their practice. We even got a couple of their stories on film. Richard, for example, wasn't an ex-combatant; he was a casualty of war. He was only three years old when he lost his left leg. Another player, Dennis, had entered the Liberian Army during peacetime. But within a year, rebel forces rose up, overran his unit and forced him to join. He fought as a rebel soldier for years before losing a leg in combat.

Evan and I got enough footage to make a fund-raising reel. Before we said goodbye, we warned the Lone



## MAN ON A MISSION

Aspiring filmmaker  
Aubrey in Brooklyn

as a team. What was their secret? How did they forgive each other and move beyond the brutal past?

"Only God knows why things are the way they are," Richard said. "Maybe he has brought us together to speak to the people of Liberia, to show them who we are and what we can do. We need to reconcile with the

past, not dwell on it. We need trust and faith to move forward."

The Lone Stars made it all the way to the final match, against Ghana. After a dismal first half, they turned the game around. They won 4-3. Watching them celebrate was quite a sight. They danced around the field, ecstatic, singing songs and sending prayers heavenward.

I filmed it all. They're champions to me not because of their gold cups but because the obstacles they faced—physical disabilities, discouragement, losing loved ones, rejection—were no match for their spirit. They moved ahead, finding this new purpose for themselves. And always forgiving, through faith, playing and praying. That was their message to the world. **G**


For more on this story, see **FAMILY ROOM**

Stars. No guarantees. But we promised to do our best to get the film made. Back in the States, we spent the next few months raising enough money to continue our project. On a shoestring budget, we made it back to Liberia in November, just in time for the 2011 Cup of African Nations championship.

This time, the players greeted us with smiles—they knew we were for real. They even invited us to their homes for meals and introduced us to their families. It was the kind of trust we had dreamed of. We traveled with the Lone Stars to Accra, Ghana, and covered their quest for the 2011 trophy.

In match after match the team prevailed. Evan and I filmed them, rooted for them, believed in them. I watched these courageous players—many of them former enemies—come together

JORDAN HOLLENDER

 To view a trailer for Aubrey's documentary, go to [guideposts.org/lethbridge](http://guideposts.org/lethbridge)



# Untamed

*A woman who couldn't trust meets  
a wild mustang who learned to*

By **CHERYLE McCONNAUGHEY**

Bellingham, Washington

**T**HE HORSE WAS A MUSTANG, wild and skittish. He didn't trust me, that's for sure. He stood on the far side of the corral, eyeing me warily. I held as still as I could, a rope and a halter dangling from my hands.

"It's okay, buddy," I said softly. "I'm your friend. I won't hurt you." I took a slow step forward.

That's how it worked at my small startup horse-training farm. I took in wild mustangs caught on the high desert rangeland of eastern Oregon and gentled them enough to be put up for adoption. I'd been a horse lover all my life, but this was my first time trying to make a living from what I loved. My voice talking to Armani—he was named after Giorgio Armani (even though he was scruffy and thin,

the horse had an aloof dignity)—was a lot steadier than I felt. It's not easy earning a living with horses. And my husband, Rick, whose trucking job basically subsidized me while I built up my business—well, things between Rick and me were pretty bad right now. Taming a wild horse was nothing compared with fixing 20 years' worth of marriage problems. What if Rick up and left? What would I do then?

Suddenly Armani bolted in a hail of dirt clods. He circled around and paced the edge of the corral, snorting. It had been like this all morning.

Shaking my head in defeat, I walked to the gate and slipped out of the pen. I'd gentled lots of horses in my life but never one this frightened. Armani wouldn't even let me get close. I'd have to try again after lunch. Which meant I



**GENTLING** That's how horse trainers like Cheryle take mustangs from wild to willing.

had to go back inside the house. Where Rick was probably up after a late-night trucking shift.

He was in the kitchen, making breakfast.

"You slept late," I said.

As soon as the words left my mouth,

I winced. I'd meant to sound glad he got some rest but it came out like an accusation.

He glared. "I worked all night, okay? Don't start on me, Cheryle." He turned his back. Conversation over. I slunk out of the room and stood at the front

PHOTOS BY KATE BALDWIN



window, clenching and unclenching my hands.

Rick and I hadn't hugged or kissed or said a loving thing to each other in—how long? I couldn't remember. Some days not even a single word. Which was ironic considering that the reason I'd married Rick was that he was so easy to talk to.

We'd met at a singles Bible study at church. Unlike the other men I'd dated over the years—too many, including my abusive ex-husband—Rick was a gentleman and he *listened*. He seemed to like me for me. We never ran out of things to talk about. After one date he

---

*Rick and I hadn't hugged or kissed or said a loving thing to each other in—how long? I couldn't remember.*

---

escorted me home and we stood at the door talking for another hour before he finally said good night.

It was a miracle he married me. I was a mess back then. They say women are drawn to men like their fathers. Unfortunately for me, my dad was an alcoholic and a womanizer. I kept getting mixed up with the wrong guys. My first husband abused me physically and emotionally. Finally I kicked him out and got a restraining order against him. Then he did the unthinkable. He came to the house while I was out with our kids and committed suicide. The kids and I found him. That left a deep

scar on my soul. From then on, my attitude was, *You're on your own, Cheryle. Trust no one.*

I kept trying to warn Rick away, but he was persistent. Gentle, polite, funny, patient but persistent. We got married and—somehow it all went wrong. Rick thought I was too permissive with the kids. I thought he didn't appreciate what they'd been through. I thought he was too much of a spender. He thought I was controlling. The hardest part was his trucking trips. He'd be gone overnight, sometimes for days. What was he doing out on the road? My dad used to tell my mom he was

on business trips when he was really with another woman. Anytime Rick was late coming home or called to say a job had been extended a day or two, I wondered.

Actually, I did more than wonder. I scoured our bank statements looking for unusual charges. I inspected receipts for the meals he ate—made sure he wasn't spending more money than I knew about. It was paranoid, I know. But I couldn't help it. Even after 20 years, I hadn't gotten past the trust thing.

And Rick hated it. We got into a shouting match every time he came home. It reached the point where something as mundane as making a grocery list sparked a fight. Finally we just stopped talking.

I ventured back into the kitchen. Rick had eaten and returned to the



**NEW BEGINNING** Cheryle and her husband, Rick, are learning to talk to each other—and falling in love—all over again.

bedroom. I made myself a quick lunch and took it outside.

I watched Armani pace his corral. Thank God I had my horses. They were my last hope. Since I was a little girl I'd always found ways to ride or work with horses, even when I had next to nothing. If I could just get this business going before Rick—I didn't let myself finish that thought. And yet there was no denying that I was 50 years old and the kids were grown and gone. Nothing kept Rick here. He could drive away in his truck and never look back.

I walked to the pen and picked up the rope and halter. Now it seemed I couldn't even gentle Armani. Usually after several days of patiently approaching a horse I'd manage to get a hand on its shoulder. That's all it took.

A reassuring touch so the animal knew I meant no harm. Then I could start with the halter and begin to lead the horse around the pen.

I stepped inside the corral. Armani got as far away from me as he could, big dark eyes wary.

Was it me? Could Armani sense my anxiety and that's what made him skittish? I was still on edge after a phone call with Rick the other day.

I'd been out shopping and I didn't hear my cell phone ring. When I finally saw Rick's message and called him back, he was furious. "You'd never let me get away with not answering like that," he fumed.

The argument escalated until I blurted, "Well, why don't you just move out?" Rick was silent. I felt my throat constrict.

"We need help," was all he said. As if anyone could really help our marriage now.

I took a step toward Armani. He pressed against the side of the corral. I heard the wood creak. How could I show him I meant no harm?

"Trust me," I whispered.

I looked straight into his eyes. Maybe he'd see something reassuring in my expression and give me a chance. We stared at each other, neither of us moving. And then, all of a sudden, in the black liquid pool of Armani's gaze, I understood why he was so afraid.

I knew because I was scared too.

I was scared Rick didn't love me. I was scared he'd never loved me and he'd leave, just as my dad and every



other man in my life had done. I was scared my business would flounder and I'd end up alone and miserable. Mostly I was scared to let go and let God. He hadn't protected me before. Why should I trust him now?

Armani and I stood there facing off. If only he could understand what I meant!

It made me wonder. Was I misunderstanding things too? I had to admit that, after 20 years, Rick was still here. Surely a man who wanted to leave would have bolted the minute I started checking over his restaurant receipts! And he'd said we needed help...could that mean he thought our marriage was worth saving? What other signs of his faithfulness had I been missing? What other signs of God's support had I been ignoring?

It was almost as if I heard a voice speaking in that corral, a voice that had been trying to speak to me for a long time. It was saying just two simple words, the same words I'd said to Armani moments before.

*Trust me.*

I took another step toward the horse. And another.

"Trust me," I said again. I could hear the change in my voice, a softer, gentler, more relaxed tone. Maybe Armani sensed it too. A moment later I was beside him. I raised my hand and put it on his shoulder. He didn't move.

It was a start. At that moment, I knew I could gentle this horse. Armani had taken the first scary step: He trusted me.

I needed gentling too if I wanted to make our marriage work.


Rick had been serious when he told me we needed help. We agreed to meet with our pastor for marriage counseling. Our pastor also recommended that we attend a marriage-themed Bible study. What a difference these things made! Not immediately, of course, but within months Rick and I were in a whole different place.

Love is indeed patient. It takes time to heal a broken marriage. And love is kind. It's hard to mistrust someone when he keeps doing things—hugs, kisses, chores, gifts of time—that you only do for love.

**T**HAT SUMMER, RICK WENT WITH me to a mustang horse meet-up, a first. We had a blast! He helped me with everything, laughing and joking and carting my stuff all over the meet-up. At one point I was talking to some old clients.

"Lucky you," they said. "We were just talking to your husband. He sure thinks the world of you! Couldn't stop telling us how great you are. If only all marriages were like that."

I gazed over at Rick, hoisting some of my equipment into the truck. For an instant I flashed back to the beginning of our life together, when we couldn't stop talking. I remembered how strange and wonderful it felt to meet someone who loved me for me.

It felt just as strange and wonderful now. Trust me. 

# MYSTERIOUS WAYS

MORE THAN COINCIDENCE

**I** turned the corner onto our street and braced myself. I had to talk rebuilding plans with our contractor, but just the thought of seeing that empty lot—where my family's house had burned to the ground seven months earlier—made me feel sick.

That night still haunted me. Waking up to the blaring of smoke alarms. Bolting out of bed with my husband, Keith, and grabbing our two young daughters from their rooms. Huddling outside in our pajamas, shivering, before seeking refuge with a neighbor. We lost everything but the clothes on our backs and a jumble of items a friend salvaged from the rubble. I knew I should be grateful my family

had escaped unharmed. But I couldn't help wondering why God left us nothing to start over with but dirt....

*Sunflowers?* I stopped the car and rubbed my eyes in disbelief. Instead of a bare dirt lot, there was a field of cheerful yellow sunflowers—hundreds of them—growing exactly where our house once stood.

We'd never grown sunflowers. None of our neighbors did, either. The contractor said they'd started springing up in our lot—and only ours—over the past few weeks. I

stared at the vibrant flowers. Surely they were a sign from God, a promise: *Life will blossom here again.*

I snapped some photos and showed them to Keith.

"Sorry to burst your bubble," he said, "but there's a perfectly logical explanation. I had a baggie of sunflower seeds in the garage. The bulldozer razing our house probably plowed them into the dirt."

So much for God's promise.

The contractor finished our new house, and we moved in. Our lives

---

*Instead of a bare dirt lot, there was a field of sunflowers, growing exactly where our house once stood.*

---


really did blossom again. Still, weeks passed before I could bring myself to sort through the box of things recovered by our friend.

Keith and I dragged the box over by the trash can and tossed out one charred item after another. I felt like crying. Then Keith gasped.

"Barb, look at this," he said. He held up the baggie of sunflower seeds he'd kept in the garage—still tightly sealed, with all the seeds inside.

**BARBARA JACKSON**

Medina, Ohio

 Have your own MYSTERIOUS WAYS story? SEND it to [mw@guideposts.org](mailto:mw@guideposts.org)





# Dolly's Dreams

What keeps this  
American icon young

By **DOLLY PARTON**  
Nashville, Tennessee

**Y**'ALL MIGHT NOT KNOW THIS ABOUT ME, but I read everything I can get my hands on. Self-help books, novels, biographies, religion, best sellers, anything that helps me see what makes people tick. When a friend says, "You gotta read this, Dolly, it's a great book," I do. You never know how it might inspire you. That's what happened back when I was on Porter Wagoner's show. One of the musicians, Buck Trent, gave me this book as a birthday present by a preacher I'd never heard of. He had a long name and preached at a big church in New York City. But he knew how to talk to a country girl like me, used to Scripture on Sundays. "Dream big, think big, pray big," this preacher said. *Lord, I thought, that's just what I want to spend my life doing!*

My earliest dreams were born in the foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains, just like I was. My mother was a big dreamer. She dreamed about having a houseful of kids, and talk about dreams come true, she had 12 of 'em! Some of

PHOTOGRAPHED FOR GUIDEPOSTS BY DAVID MCCLISTER



us might have seemed like nightmares at times, but she was great about not trying to mold us or shape us to be like anybody else. Mama wanted each of us to be who God made us. And boy, did he make me a dreamer!

I'd put a tin can on a stick for a microphone, jab one end into a crack in the porch of our cabin and sing a song that I'd made up. All at once those weren't our chickens listening to me out there in the yard. They were an audience full of people clapping and cheering. And that wasn't a hand-me-down shift I was wearing; it was a silk dress aglitter with rhinestones. Mama's people were all musical. "Sing one of your songs," she'd say, and I'd sing. My uncle Louis saw how serious I was about music, so he gave me a guitar, a baby Martin. Oh, I loved that guitar! I played it all the time.

I prayed my dreams. Lived and breathed 'em too. Maybe that's why it never occurred to me they might not come true. The night I graduated from Sevier County High School, all the seniors got up and said what they wanted to do: go to college, get married, take a job in Knoxville (the closest city). I sat there in the fancy pink dress my aunt Estelle had bought for me and waited my turn. Then I stood up and announced, "I'm gonna move to Nashville and be a big star."

Everybody laughed. I was so embarrassed. I couldn't understand why they laughed. Years later I realized it was because *they* were embarrassed. They'd never known anybody who had the gall to dream that big and declare it out loud.

**D**REAMS ARE NEVER GONNA come true if you don't put wings on 'em. Not only wings—they need feet, hands, a brain. You've got to work really hard to make a dream come true. That's the difference between a wish and a dream. You can sit around and wish for good things to happen to you, but a dream is something you have to pursue, something you make happen.

Like all country kids I knew which bugs I could play with and which ones would sting. We'd put a string on June bugs and fly them like kites or put lightning bugs in a jar for a homemade flashlight (we released them later). But butterflies were the ones I loved most. As a little bitty child, I'd get lost chasing them into the woods. Everybody hollered at me, but I didn't care. *I'm going to be like a butterfly*, I decided. *Spread my wings and fly.*

You've got to be responsible for your dreams. You've got to take care of them the way you take care of your children, protect them, say no to people who want to remake them their own way.

I wake up early in the morning to do my dreaming—at four o'clock, 'cause I'm not a big sleeper. I think of God as a farmer throwing out nuggets of wisdom and inspiration first thing. I get out there and pick 'em up before everyone else. In the wee hours, the world is quiet and I can really listen to God.

Because, most of all, you have to trust him with your dreams. Maybe he's got something planned that's even better than you expect. I thank God for all

the blessings he's given me. I ask him to take the wrong things out of my life and bring in the right things. If my prayers are slow to be answered, I think, *Well, that's part of this prayer. God's trying to make me work on something.* If he gave us everything we wanted right when we wanted it, we'd already be in heaven and I wouldn't be here talking to you.

You might think with all I've accomplished in my life—going to Nashville and becoming a big star beyond even my wildest dreams—I would rest easy. No, ma'am. As long as I can, I'm gonna keep going—writing songs, making music, going on tour, building parks, being creative. If I can't get up and walk, they're gonna have to put wheels on my rocking chair so I can still rock and roll. I keep thinking big, dreaming big and praying big. Believe me, you never get too old to dream.

For instance, at Dollywood we're building a resort where families can slow down, kick back and just enjoy being together. It's got a real down-home feel, with rocking chairs and straight-back chairs on big white porches, where you can take in the quiet and talk to God in the morning, or gather with your loved ones and swap stories all night long. Dollywood's DreamMore Resort, we call it.

Back to books. My love of reading is another thing I got from my mama. We didn't have television in our cabin in the Smokies, and our radio was used only to listen to the Grand Ole Opry and

the news. So Mama would sing to us and read to us from the Bible. The stories from the Old Testament made me want to know more—and read more.

So many of my people when I was growing up didn't get a chance at education, like my daddy, who never learned to read or write, though he was very smart. That's why one of my dreams has been to give free books to children who need them. I created a program called Imagination Library to do just that. It started in my hometown (Daddy was so proud that kids called me the Book Lady, even prouder than he was when I became a member of the Grand Ole Opry) and has spread all over the country. So far we've given out 50 million books, and we're still going strong.

**N**OW, ABOUT THAT BOOK that inspired me all those years ago. The one by the preacher who said think big, pray big and dream big. He's also the man who started this magazine you're reading—Norman Vincent Peale, author of *The Power of Positive Thinking*. Who would've guessed that a little girl who sang to the chickens in her yard and got lost in the woods chasing butterflies would one day appear on the cover of a national magazine? Why, that's more than even I could dream up!

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For more on this story, see FAMILY ROOM



Dolly offers advice on pursuing your dream at [guideposts.org/dolly](http://guideposts.org/dolly)





ROBERT SEALE



OUR RETURNING TROOPS

SIXTH IN A SERIES

# From the Inside

*What I went through in Iraq was no laughing matter, but laughter is what saved me*

By **BOBBY HENLINE**

Universal City, Texas

**I**T'S HARD TO MISS MY SCARS. ONE ear is gone, the other is mangled, my bald head is a patchwork of skin grafts and my left arm ends in a stump. How did I end up like this? I tell folks it took four tours in Iraq for me to realize that my lucky number is three. Funny, right? Don't get me wrong, there's nothing funny about what happened to me, but laughter has helped me heal. And it's made me realize that how I look isn't really what's changed the most.

*Why did I survive?* Eight months after the explosion, I lay awake in bed next to my wife, Connie, that question hammering away at me.

The day before Easter in 2007, I was three weeks into my fourth deployment as an Army staff sergeant and transportation specialist. My unit, D Troop,

5-73rd of the 82nd Airborne Division, was prepping for a supply run to a base north of Baghdad. I joined four of my buddies for a briefing to go over what we'd do in case of a breakdown or attack. They were young, most on their first tour. At 36, I was the old man of the bunch. Still, we were tight, like brothers. At the end of the briefing, they bowed their heads and said a prayer. *Hurry up with this God stuff*, I thought. I had no use for someone who wasn't in the here and now.

We got in our Humvee and rolled out. That's the last thing I remember.

I wasn't one of those guys who was gung-ho Army from the day he could walk. I grew up in San Jose, California, a Navy brat. And a rebel. I wasn't into school. Or church. The idea of some unseen being telling us what to do with our lives—that didn't make sense to me.

The main thing I was into was partying. I drank, smoked weed, dropped

**COMIC RELIEF** Bobby's stand-up-comedy routine is built around his war experiences.



## OUR RETURNING TROOPS

out of high school. My uncle, who's six years older, set me straight when I was 17. "I'm joining the Army," he said. "You'd better sign up with me if you know what's good for you." Deep down, I did. I knew I was in trouble.

**I**SERVED IN DESERT STORM, THEN mustered out. I went back to California and worked different jobs—radio deejay, truck driver, railroad maintenance man. One night I met Connie, a medical biller. Gorgeous and smart. Our birthdays were a day apart, we'd grown up one town over from each other, loved the same music. The only thing we didn't have in common was faith. "I feel God's presence all the time," Connie told me. "Not me," I said. "I don't buy that whole God thing." I couldn't understand why someone as smart as Connie did, but that didn't stop me from falling in love.

We married, bought a house, started a family. Life was good, and I was content. Then September 11, 2001, happened. I may have been a bit of a cynic but I was a patriot. I reenlisted. Connie understood. That October, at age 30, I went through basic training again, then airborne school, and straight to the 82nd. Serving my country gave me a sense of purpose my civilian jobs hadn't. I did a second tour in Iraq. A third. In 2007, I was called for my fourth. That fateful Saturday, April 7, my buddies and I got into our Humvee and headed out on our supply run.

The next thing I remember, I was

standing on top of what looked to be a giant iceberg, except it wasn't cold. The sky was an inky black, dotted with stars. I heard voices, like in a choir. Not singing, though. Chanting. "You're going to be okay." "Hold on." I didn't recognize the voices, yet I'd never felt so loved, so at peace. *If I believed in heaven, this is what it would be like*, I thought. I didn't want to leave. But the voices chanted, "Your family is waiting for you," and I knew I was being sent back.

Then came another voice. "Can you hear me? What is your name?" I forced my eyes open. I was lying in a bed, a doctor leaning over me.

"Staff Sergeant Bobby Henline," I rasped. Why was it so hard to speak?

A woman stepped close. Connie! "Thank God," she said. "I've been praying you'd wake up. You were in a terrible accident."

Connie told me I was at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas. Insurgents had buried an improvised explosive device in the road. The blast was so powerful it threw our Humvee five car-lengths away, where it burst into flames. Almost 40 percent of my body had been burned. I'd been in a medically induced coma for two weeks.

Connie held a mirror up. My head was seared down to my skull. My ears looked melted. Surprisingly, I didn't flip out. I don't know how, but I still saw the old me in there.

"The guys?" I asked. I had to know.

"I'm so sorry," Connie said, shaking her head. My body wanted to buck and flail in anger but I could barely move.

## Celebrate Our Miraculous, Spiritual Connection With Animals

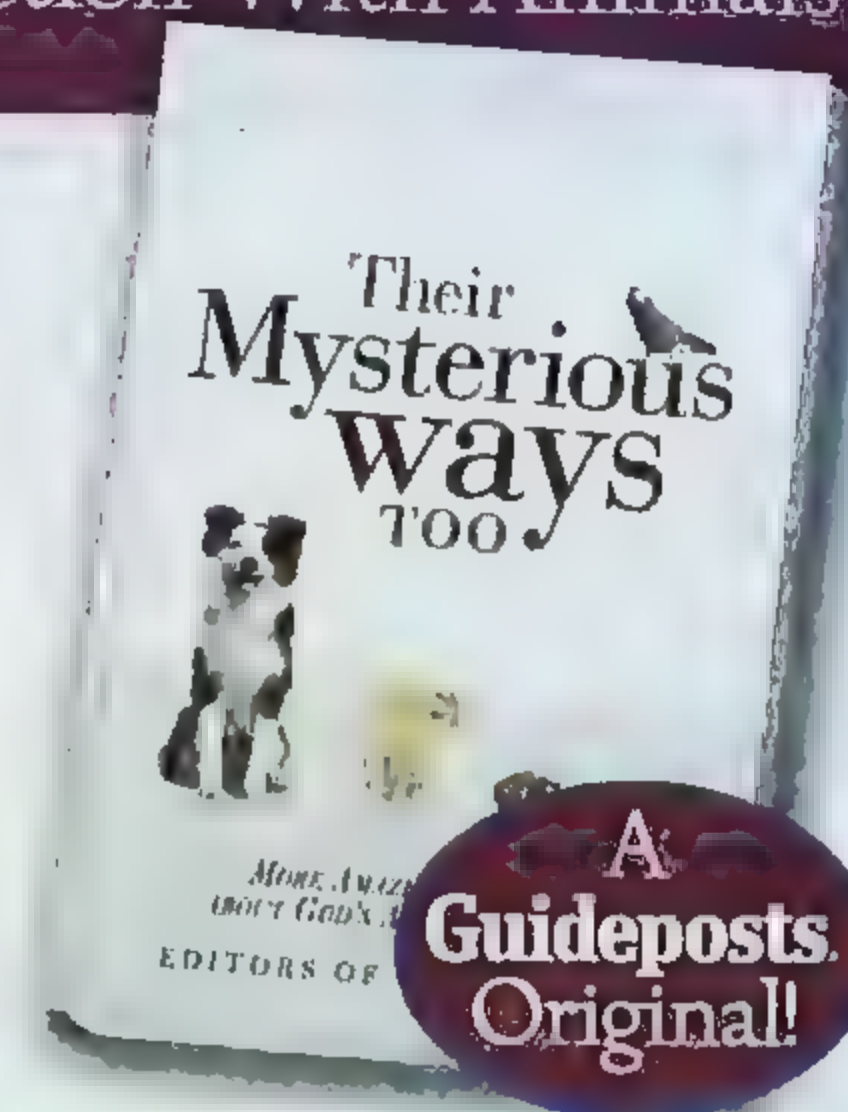
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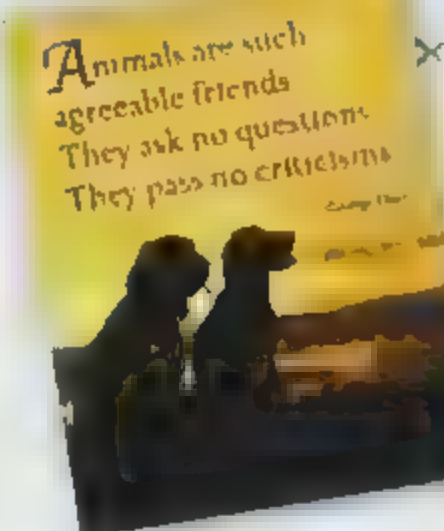
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**TOUR OF DUTY** Staff Sergeant Henline in south Baghdad, 2003

What the heck was that whole deal on the iceberg, then? If it was supposed to be some vision of heaven—if there even was a heaven—why weren't my buddies there? If there was a God, why didn't he save them? The four of them were the ones who believed. They were kids compared to me, with their lives ahead of them. After four tours, I was practically asking to die. Why me? Why did I survive? I had no right!

Guilt gnawed at me the six months I was in the hospital. Kept eating at me after we moved our family to San Antonio to be close to a burn center. Connie left her job to become my full-time caregiver. The slightest infection could have killed me, so she had to dress my wounds—it took almost six hours—before we went to one of my appointments. And there were plenty: social worker, burn specialist, physical therapist, occupational therapist.

Our teenager daughter, Brittany, was a huge help, with me and with our

younger kids, Skylar and McKenzie. I was in no shape to go over homework or play catch. I couldn't even tie my own shoes. It was obvious that everyone would be better off without me. Not that I said that—I knew they'd freak—but I kept thinking, *I'm no good to anyone.*

Like now, lying awake while Connie slept. Why did I survive? Why did I have that strange vision on the iceberg? I couldn't stand it anymore. "God, if you are real, just take me," I whispered. "Do everyone a favor."

The next morning, I woke, still breathing. That night I asked the same thing. Again I woke up. For a month straight I demanded that God take me, yet I kept waking up every morning.

*This is like some weird test of wills,* I thought. That's when it hit me: Keeping me here, that had to be God's will. It definitely wasn't what I wanted. Which meant God was probably real. And he wasn't finished with me yet. But what the heck did he want?

So I took things day by day. I stopped asking to die. A year after the explosion I was able to drive again. I took the girls to the mall and Skylar to paintball with his friends. Everywhere we went people stared, then looked away. That upset the kids, but I shrugged it off. I figured folks didn't know how to approach me. So I wore funny T-shirts (like one that says *Got Burns?*). I'd smile at people and say hey. That usually got them to respond. Talking to them made me realize how much I missed hanging out with my Army buddies, just joking around. Sometimes humor

COURTESY BOBBY HENLINE



was the only way we could cope with the constant danger.

**T**HAT WAS ONE THING THE EXPLOSION hadn't destroyed: my sense of humor. I deployed it. During one occupational-therapy session, I cracked, "I've done four tours in Iraq, but that last one? It was a real blast."

My therapist laughed.

I kept going. "Last night my wife and I were in a restaurant and she ordered a steak. I told the waiter, 'She wants it well done. Like her man.'"

"You should be a stand-up comedian," my OT said.

"Get up in front of strangers?" I shook my head. "I'll stick to telling jokes to people I know. Besides, I'm going away for a while. I have to go to Los Angeles for skin-graft surgery."

"Perfect," she said. "My sister lives in L.A., right near the Comedy Store. She'll help you get in."

My OT bugged me about it until finally I said I'd give it a shot as long as she never asked me about it again.

I told Connie. She teased, "I don't know. You're funny, but not *that* funny." I came up with some jokes and tried them out on her and the kids. They loved my routine. Would anyone else?

My OT's sister got me a three-minute gig for open-mike night at the Comedy Store. I stepped onstage, looked at the audience—three of my friends and some comedians—and paused. Then said, "You should see the other guy." I got a few chuckles. But I

didn't get much of a reaction for the rest of my set. *Oh, well*, I thought. *I bombed*. Good word choice, considering, right?

Backstage a comedian said she liked one of my jokes. "Don't give up," she said. "You're funny."

Hey! I'd clicked with someone who didn't know me. I wrote more jokes and tried them out in a comedy club back in San Antonio. "I love the Fourth of July," I told the audience. "I go up to the fireworks stands and say, 'Give me the same stuff you gave me last year. It was great!'"

The crowd went wild. Being up there was invigorating—reaching people in the audience, making them laugh. I booked another gig.

*I get it, God, I thought. This is the new mission you have for me. Make people laugh and forget their troubles.* Laughter helped me forget about mine and remember what mattered more—connecting with people.

These days you can find me performing at comedy clubs across the country, for veterans' groups and for troops overseas. You'll also find me sitting next to Connie at church.

I still have tough days, days when that question haunts me: *Why did I survive?* Why me and not my buddies? But someday I'll see them again—in a place of infinite love and peace—and maybe we'll look up at the starry sky and figure out the answer. Until then, I know God's with me in the here and now, as real as it gets. And that's no joke. ©

For more on this story, see FAMILY ROOM

# summer READING SPECIAL

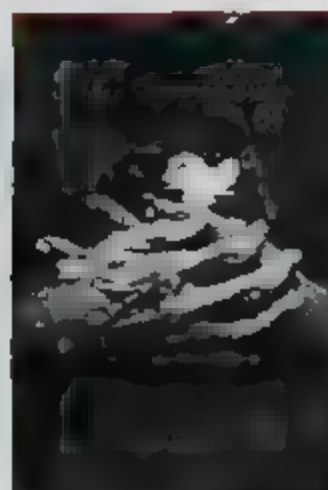
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## Summer Reading Guide



### The Waiting

Cathy LaGrow  
Cornered by a stranger in the woods and assaulted, a young girl would not realize for months that she was pregnant. Eighty years later, she begs God to

let her be reunited with the daughter she gave up—could her impossible prayer come true? #1 *New York Times* bestselling author Homer Hickam calls *The Waiting* "one of the most eloquent, moving, irresistible true stories I have ever read." Published by Tyndale Momentum



### Plain Faith: A True Story of Tragedy, Loss, and Leaving the Amish

Ora-Jay & Irene Eash  
with Tricia Goyer  
The true story of Amish parents whose lives changed in an instant

when a semi-truck struck the family buggy, killing their two young daughters. After the accident, the couple turned to their Amish community for comfort, but they remained haunted by the thought that they might not see their girls again in heaven. Would their deeds be good enough?

Published by Zondervan

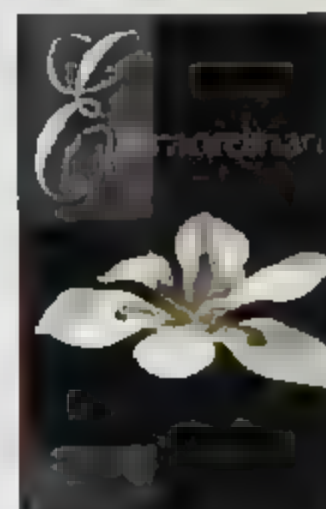


### Blind Descent

Brian Dickinson  
Brian Dickinson, former Navy rescue swimmer, was 1,000 feet from the Mt. Everest summit when his Sherpa had to stop and Brian had to continue climbing solo.

When reaching the top, an equipment malfunction caused him to become snow blind and he was forced to descend Mt. Everest by faith and feel, not sight. Don't miss this extraordinary adventure and faith journey. Perfect for Adventure readers or Military memoir fans.

Published by Tyndale House Publishers



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Nancy L. Dorner  
An atheist learns by a series of prayer experiments that God is real, God cares, and God answers prayer. Read this book, follow

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SUMMER READING SPECIAL

## EDITOR'S PICKS



ONE OF THE JOYS OF SUMMER IS WEARING NEW shoes. After a long winter in boots, it's pure pleasure to walk in sandals. And I love wiggling my toes in the sand, especially with a good book in hand. There's that old saying about walking a mile in someone else's shoes. Well, let me suggest some new shoes for you to try on this summer.

**Travelin' shoes.** Take a journey with Elizabeth Sherrill, one of Guideposts' most beloved writers. Read a preview from her memoir, *Surprised by Grace*, on page 44.

**Lace-up boots.** An accident jolts Ora-Jay and Irene to look beyond their Amish traditions and renew their faith in an amazing way in *Plain Faith*.

**Gumshoes.** Can't resist a good mystery? Uncover secrets and track down clues in the *Mysteries of Silver Peak* series. Find out more on page 49.

**Cinderella slippers.** Sometimes, as in *The Waiting*, life has a fairy-tale ending. Cathy LaGrow tells her grandmother's true story of giving her baby up for adoption as a teen and the joy of their reunion almost 80 years later.

**Crampons.** In *Blind Descent*, Brian Dickinson makes a solo ascent of Mount Everest, but when snow blindness sets in, God is his only hope.

**High-tops.** Kids will love the bright red high-tops in *Can't-Wait Willow!*, the purple shoes in *God's Amazing World*, and the polka-dotted rubber boots in *Daddy Loves You!*

**Bare Feet.** Animals don't wear shoes, right? Well, except horses. In *Their Mysterious Ways Too*, you'll meet many creatures who show us God's love in unexpected and miraculous ways. See the excerpt on page 46.

Books open up a world and send my heart traveling with the turn of each page. May you have a summer of reading that takes you on many an inspirational journey...with shoes that fit just right!

LENORE PERSON  
Editor-in-Chief, Guideposts Books



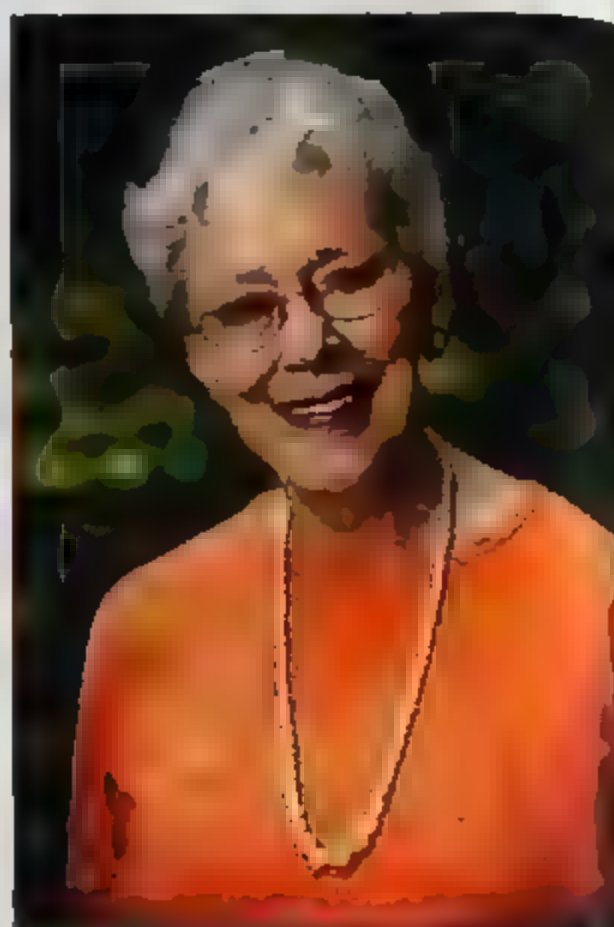
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# THE HAND HOLDER

An excerpt from longtime Guideposts contributing editor Elizabeth Sherrill's surprising spiritual autobiography

By ELIZABETH SHERRILL  
Hingham, Massachusetts



ON THE WALL OF MY MOTHER-in-law's bedroom in Louisville, Kentucky, hung a framed quotation in Gothic script:

I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year: "Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown." And he replied: "Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God. That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way."

When I first went to Louisville to meet my new in-laws, I would step into that room, read these lines by the poet Minnie Louise Haskins, and puzzle over them.

Although my father's father had been a Unitarian minister, my parents never went to church, or even talked about religion. The only one in the fam-

ily who did was Daddy's sister Helen, who attended the austere red-brick Unitarian church on East Thirty-fifth Street in Manhattan, where I often went with her. I was only a visitor at Aunt Helen's church, but whenever I had to fill in a blank under *Religion*, I would write "Unitarian."

The words in that frame seemed to me the embodiment of everything Unitarians rejected. An anthropomorphic deity (how could anyone hold the "hand" of God!). Blind faith (why should being led around in the dark be better than stepping out in the clear light of reason?). Such outmoded religious notions, Aunt Helen had assured me, were believed only by ignorant people.

My mother-in-law, Helen Sherrill, however, was not ignorant. An author and authority on early childhood de-

velopment, she must have thought this enigmatic quote important to hang it where her eyes would light on it first thing each morning.

Later, when Mother and Dad Sherrill moved to New York City, the Haskins quotation hung on the wall of their bedroom there. It hangs today in my bedroom. In the years since I first read those words, I've become an adherent of that "outmoded" religion. And I've come to see in Haskins's prose-poem the traveler's guide to heaven.

Our hand in his is, of course, a poet's way of expressing trust. And why should dark be better for our journey than daylight? Because, I've come to feel, holding our hand is God's delight.

Oh, there are practical reasons too, why he cannot banish the darkness here and now. Light—his Light—would show us too much. In 1991, an operation was performed on a blind man named Virgil. For 45 years, neurologist Oliver Sacks reported, Virgil had functioned effectively as a sightless person. Suddenly able to see, he was overwhelmed by a torrent of impressions bombarding a brain that could not process them. He became disoriented, listless, miserable. When

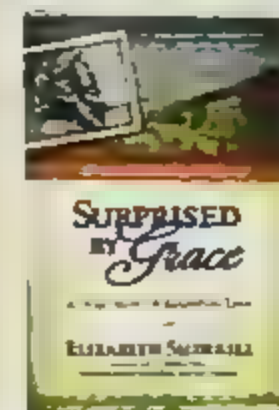
an illness destroyed his new-won vision, Virgil welcomed the return of blindness.

"Now, at last," wrote Dr. Sacks, "Virgil is allowed to not see."

Allowed to not see...If we were suddenly able to see as God sees—the entire past, the entire future, the ultimate consequence of each thing we do, each word we speak—perhaps we too would be unable to cope. Perhaps in his compassion God *must* keep us in the dark.

But I think his hand-holding goes far beyond mere necessity. When our kids were teenagers, a Beatles song throbbed through our house: "I want to hold your h-a-a-a-nd." I believe God sings the same refrain. I think he longs to keep us company, to walk at our side, hand in hand. I think he doesn't reveal the future to us not only because we couldn't handle it, but because if he did we'd drop his hand and race ahead alone. "Thanks! I see how to get there now!"

*Getting there*, even to some noble goal, is not as important to God, I suspect, as the journey in companionship with him. It's relationship, not achievement, that he wants. ©



Elizabeth, coauthor of *The Hiding Place*, shares her own story in the heartwarming memoir *Surprised by Grace*. She traces her journey from an agnostic upbringing, through clinical depression, to a stunning encounter with God.

SHAWN O. HENRY



# Then came SHREDDER

An unforgettable story from the collection  
Their Mysterious Ways Too

By BARBARA AQUA  
Tacoma, Washington

I OPENED THE DOOR TO THE Trents' house and was greeted, as usual, by Shredder, their Airedale. He bounded toward me, jumped up and put a paw on each shoulder. "Okay, boy," I said, rubbing the inside of his ears the way he liked. He groaned contentedly. Then he brought me the raggedy old stuffed monkey he liked to play fetch with. I tossed it down the hall a few times. "That's all for now," I told him. If Shredder had his way, I'd play with him all day. He had energy to burn. But with so many things on my schedule—PTA meetings, Girl Scouts, dinner, other houses to clean—I didn't have time.

I'd been cleaning for the Trents going on two years. I should have been used to dogs being underfoot. After all, my husband, Dave, our two girls and I had a pair of high-energy Scottish terriers. That day I told Shredder to lie down on his pillow. "I've got to get to work now," I said.

I headed downstairs to vacuum the family room. Shredder settled on his pillow. *Probably can't wait till I'm done so we can play some more, I thought. Too bad for him that I'm out of here as soon as I'm finished.*

All of a sudden pain shot through my head. It was unlike anything I'd ever felt—10 times worse. Light exploded behind my eyes. The vacuum hose slipped out of my hand, and I fell to my knees. I knew someone who'd died from a brain aneurysm. *Is that what's happening to me?* I had to get help. Now. Before it was too late.

Phone, I thought. The nearest phone was in the kitchen. I tried to stand up, but couldn't. *I have to get upstairs.* It felt like my head was going to explode. I managed to crawl to the foot of the steps. But I couldn't move anymore. I was helpless.

Through the pounding pain, I said a prayer. *God, I don't want this to be the end. I've got a husband and*



**PLAYMATES** Barbara and Shredder, who came to her rescue

ing? "Come here," I whispered, trying to make my voice sound playful. He cocked his head and stared quizzically. "C'mon, boy," I said. Shredder padded down the steps and stood next to me. His tail stopped wagging. Did he sense something was wrong?

"Help me, Shredder," I said, grabbing his collar with my left hand. He climbed a step, then stopped. "Up!" I said. He looked back at me as if to say, "Is this right?" "Go," I whispered. He started

to drag me. My left arm went numb. I had to look at Shredder's collar to make sure I kept my grip. I reached with my right hand, managed to get hold of the banister and pulled.

two kids who need me. I want to see them again. Please help. I looked up. Shredder stared back at me from the top step, tail slightly thumping the floor. Did he think I was play-



PAUL SOUDERS

In this collection of true stories, you'll meet pets who are part of the family and animals who seem to have been sent by God. As you read, you'll find comfort, humor and the knowledge that God's love extends to all his creatures—human and animal.



Shredder tugged, and I made it up one step at a time.

I squeezed my eyes shut. Little explosions of light flashed across the inside of my eyelids. "Hurry, Shredder."

Shredder got me to the top of the steps. Then I started to crawl. Shredder grabbed my sleeve in his teeth. He pulled and tugged, helping me across the kitchen floor. Now I knew what that stuffed monkey must've felt like. Finally, the phone. *You're not going to make it. Call Dave.* I needed to tell

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SHREDDER GRABBED MY  
SLEEVE IN HIS TEETH.  
HE PULLED, HELPING  
ME ACROSS THE FLOOR.

---

him what had happened. I didn't want the Trents to have to deliver the bad news. I got the answering machine. The message I left must have scared him silly. "I'm at the Trents'. I think I'm having an aneurysm. I'm going to die. I just wanted to tell you I love you." Then I called 911.

Shredder sat down next to me. "Good boy." I wanted to rub his ear, but I couldn't. Still, he stayed right by my side.

The EMTs showed up in minutes. Shredder, who is friendly almost to a fault, jumped to his feet and started growling. "It's okay," I said.

He seemed to accept that they were here to help, and sat back down obediently, head cocked.

"Any history of heart trouble?" one EMT asked.

"No," I told her. "It's my head. Pain."

"Looks like you've been without oxygen." They strapped me to a gurney and rolled me out of the house. The last thing I recall is seeing Shredder.

Doctors discovered that a heart valve had gone into a spasm. It could have been caused by any number of things: a temporary blockage or a sudden severe migraine (which would explain the extreme pain in my head). They discharged me after four days, but I had another 16 weeks of complete bed rest. All that lying around doing nothing nearly drove me crazy. Maybe I was a little bit like Shredder, always needing to be active. I kept worrying about all the PTA meetings I was missing, the dinners I couldn't fix, the houses I should have been cleaning.

Then one day my girls came into my room after school. "Mom, we're so glad you're here with us all the time!" one said. They told me about their day, then went off to do their homework. I thought about what they'd said. Maybe this was an opportunity to slow down and spend a little quality time with my family. *Okay, Lord, I get the message.*

Still, I couldn't wait to get back to the Trents' house. Not to clean. But to finish a game of fetch. Shredder had been waiting to play for too long. ©

# DISCOVERING SILVER PEAK

*The real-life inspiration behind our  
intriguing new mystery series*

By JON WOODHAMS

Associate Editor, Guideposts Books



I WALKED TO THE WINDOW OF MY new office and peered down at the yellow cabs and pedestrians 12 floors below. I could hear the horns honking, even this far up. I pinched myself, not quite believing I was working in Manhattan. My first day as a fiction editor for Guideposts Books. I'd been a book editor for years, but this was something new for me, creating a dynamic fiction series, pulling characters and plots from my imagination. Now that I needed to actually come up with an idea, the doubts crept in. Could I really do this job? Not just edit a book but create a whole fictional world? I said a quick prayer—a prayer for inspiration.

Many of Guideposts' fiction series have featured charming seaside towns and protagonists who use both their faith and their wits. I'd just come to New York from landlocked Colo-

rado. Maybe a western location would resonate with our readers.

I picked up a magnet I'd stuck on my office bookshelf. It read *Leadville, Colorado: The Two-Mile-High City*. One of the first places I'd visited when I moved to Colorado Springs. One June day a friend and I decided to drive to Leadville, the highest incorporated city in the United States. My little car wheezed and gasped as it carried us from Colorado Springs's 6,000-foot elevation to Leadville's thin-aired 10,430 feet, passing herds of grazing buffalo and the silver mines that had fueled the area's boomtown days.

It was sunny but quite cool despite the time of year. We wheezed a bit ourselves as we walked the streets gunfighters like Doc Holliday had once trod. The views were beautiful and Leadville's rustic charms were irresistible. The brick buildings had





**LEADVILLE, COLORADO** Home to the historic Tabor Opera House and Evelyn Furman, who led its restoration and inspired many, including Guideposts Books editor Jon Woodhams

been constructed at the height of the town's silver boom in the late 1800s, and even in varying states of disrepair, they still reflected the rich Victorian architecture of the era.

An old hardware store had been turned into an antiques mall and beautiful galleries had art depicting the rough-and-tumble days of the Old West. We passed the office of the *Herald Democrat*, Leadville's newspaper, published since the 1880s. Restaurants looked as if they might once have served hardscrabble miners.

Then we came to the Tabor Opera

House. We poked our heads in. There was the sound of hammering. Workers called to one another across the old auditorium. A gray-haired woman with glasses welcomed us and offered to give us a tour.

We climbed up to the lighting catwalks. We stood on the stage where turn-of-the-century luminaries such as Houdini, John Philip Sousa and Sarah Bernhardt had performed. After giving a lecture there in 1882, the English wit Oscar Wilde visited a nearby saloon, "where I saw the only rational method of art criticism," he

wrote. "Over the piano was printed a notice—'Please do not shoot the pianist. He is doing his best.'" We were breathless from the exertion at the high elevation, but our hostess was unfazed. She, almost single-handedly, it seemed, was spearheading the restoration of the historic structure.

At the end of the tour we thanked her and joked about how hard it had been to keep up with her.

She laughed. "I'm in my eighties, you know," she said. I was stunned. She looked much younger and had the energy of someone half her age. "I don't know how much longer I'll be able to keep working to fix up this old place, but I will as long as I can, and then I hope my daughter will take over...." She left it there.

Now, years later, as I remembered her passion for the place, I thought, *She could be the main character in the fiction series.* Not exactly her, but someone with her indomitable spirit, and the setting would be an old Western town with a colorful history. Thus was born Sadie Speers, the heroine of our new series *Mysteries of Silver Peak*. Instead of restoring an old opera house, Sadie runs an antique shop, but

she's just as knowledgeable about her town as my tour guide was. She's the person everyone turns to with questions about its history and mysteries.

As the first *Silver Peak* book rolled off the presses I wondered, *Who was that woman we spoke to? Whatever happened to her?* I searched online. Lo and behold, front and center on the Tabor Opera House Facebook page was a photograph of our tour guide, Evelyn Livingston Furman.

There was also an obituary from the *Herald Democrat*. Mrs. Furman had died in February 2011, two months short of her ninety-eighth birthday. She was widely credited with saving the opera house. Not only had she overseen its restoration but she was the one who, in 1954, purchased the building to prevent it from being torn down. Today it's run by her daughter and son-in-law, just as she'd hoped.

Sadie Speers—like her real-life inspiration—is a woman with a passion for her town and its history. She puts that love to good use in each and every volume of this exciting series. I hope you'll find the books, and Sadie, as memorable and inspiring as Evelyn Furman was to me. ©



Follow the adventures of antique-shop owner Sadie Speers in this faith-filled series of novels, as she digs into the history of her high-country Colorado town to uncover secrets and solve mysteries left behind in the items she sells.

IWD ROOSPOLD/ALAMY



# The Faith of a Friend

*It wasn't that I believed  
God couldn't heal me.  
It was just that he hadn't*

By **ROBERTA MESSNER**  
Huntington, West Virginia

**B**AD NEWS TRAVELS FAST. ESPECIALLY in a hospital. I should know; I've been a registered nurse working in hospitals for more than 35 years. And that morning, the bad news was mine.

I'd just sat down in my office at the VA Medical Center and logged on to my computer when my friend Wanda walked in.

"I heard," she said. "One of the other nurses told me. I drove here like greased lightning just to see you."

Wanda Fay Neaves is about the cutest thing you've ever seen: Blue-eyed and petite, with graying strawberry-blond hair, she always wore a hat to match her outfit. I'd met her 15 years earlier when she had an appointment at our medical center. We hit it off right away. She was a Vietnam-era vet—she'd been a hospital corpsman in the Navy, where she drove an ambulance and served as an X-ray technician. But at the VA Wanda was best known for one thing: her prayers.

Whenever she had an appointment



**HEALING TOUCH** Wanda (left) rushed to Roberta's side when she heard the diagnosis.

here she stopped by my department. She'd lead us in a prayer of protection for the day, or ask if anyone had a special need. Or she'd bring us inspiring poems she'd written. I always felt closer to God when Wanda was around. That was something I needed more than ever right now.

The day before, I'd had my annual mammogram. The moment the radiologist walked into my room with the

results, I knew something was wrong. Terribly wrong. He fiddled with his pen and stared at the floor, just like my mother's doctor eight years before when he delivered her diagnosis.

Next to lung carcinoma, breast cancer is the leading cause of cancer deaths in women. It killed my mother. I'd known I was at risk because of my strong family history (Mom's sister also had breast cancer). Still, the diagnosis was devastating. Especially considering what I'd already been through in life.

I'd endured 32 surgeries due to neurofibromatosis, a genetic disorder that causes benign tumors to grow on nerves, mostly in the head and neck. Thirty-two times, I'd pleaded to God for healing. And 32 times, the answer had been a resounding no. Wasn't it enough that my cranial and facial tumors had disfigured me and made me feel "less than" as a woman, like I wasn't worthy of love? My husband had left me because he couldn't handle my illness and now I was all alone. Did I have to suffer even more?

Wanda's voice pulled me back to the present. "Tonight my church, Christ Temple, is having a healing service," she said. "I really want you to come, Roberta. People have had their hearing restored, depression relieved...cancer healed."

Healing service? *Been there, done*

CRAIG CUNNINGHAM



that. Several years earlier, when a tumor in my brain returned, I went to one. The minister asked for anyone who needed healing to gather at the altar. I couldn't get there fast enough. That night, others around me proclaimed they'd been touched by God and healed. Me? I didn't feel a thing. Nothing. The pain, the tumor were still there. I couldn't understand it. Why were they healed and not me? If God loved me, didn't I deserve to be healed too?

Afterward, friends wanted to know what had happened at the service. "My tumor wasn't healed," I told them. "I'll need several more surgeries. But I received a different kind of touch. I was healed of the need to be healed." I must have sounded convincing because they believed me.

But deep in my heart, I didn't believe it. I longed, desperately longed, to be healed. Still, if God hadn't chosen to heal my body in the past, after all my pleas, why would he heal me now?

I couldn't confess my doubts to Wanda. She was so excited about this service.

"Okay," I said. "For you, I'll go. I'll meet you at your church at seven."

After work, I stopped at my friend Sue's. She played the piano at my church and we often talked about our faith. I told her about Wanda's unwavering conviction that I would be healed.

"That reminds me of that story in the Bible," Sue said. "The one where the friends of a paralyzed man took him to see Jesus. Remember? They

carried him on a mat but they couldn't get him to Jesus because of the crowd. So they made an opening in the roof, then lowered the man through. Jesus healed the man because of the faith of his friends. It was an active, humble faith—like your friend Wanda's."

I thought about that all the way to Christ Temple that evening. *But that was in biblical times*, I decided. *Not today.*

**T**HE PARKING LOT AT CHRIST Temple was overflowing. I spotted Wanda in a yellow top, a long blue skirt—and blue hat to match. She led me to a seat on the left side of the spacious sanctuary. The choir burst out into song. Wanda held me and rocked me to the beat of the music, whispering, "Jesus cares, love. He wants to make you whole again."

The minister's message centered around healing Scriptures. Then he asked for anyone who had sickness of any kind to come forward. "This is your time, Roberta," Wanda whispered.

When someone cares for you, *really* cares, even the way they say your name is different.

Wanda headed toward the front of the sanctuary. I trailed after her, walking slowly, as if I already knew the discouraging verdict. The crowd was huge! We didn't even make it close to where the minister was standing.

"Let's just leave," I told Wanda. "There are so many people here, he'll never get to me."

"That's okay, love," she said. "We don't need to be where the minister can see us. God knows where you are." She stroked my hair, then tucked a strand behind my ear with great tenderness, the way a mother does.

I leaned in to my friend's touch—and even more, her words. I'd never felt more loved. *God knows where I am*, I thought. *God knows who I am.*

Wanda took my hand. "Oh, precious Jesus, heal my friend Roberta," she said. Just at that moment, a strange warmth surged through my body, almost like an electrical current. At first I was confused, on the verge of being frightened.

It was a feeling within my body that wasn't actually me. "Wanda!" I shouted. "Something's happening.... I'm burning up!"

"I know, love," she said. "I feel it too!"

Another burst of heat pulsed through my chest. Fiery but not painful, no longer frightening, but comforting, warm and reassuring in a way I had never known. For a moment, I felt light-headed and weak-kneed. "It's happening again," I said to Wanda.

She squeezed my hand tightly and nodded.

The minister addressed the congregation. "There's a blonde woman here," he said. "She's in the back. When she came tonight, she had cancer. And she had doubts. But God just touched her

body." *It's me*, I thought. *He's talking about me!*

The next day I went back to the breast center and told the staff about the healing service. They exchanged skeptical glances. Still, I was determined. "Okay, let's take a look," the radiologist finally said. He did another mammogram.

I sat in the exam room, waiting for the results. The doctor walked in. This time he looked me straight in the eye. "It's amazing," he said. "I can't explain it, at least not medically. The entire area of cancer is gone." They ran a few more tests, and sure enough—there

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*Just at that moment, a strange warmth surged through my body, almost like an electrical current.*

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was no malignancy. "You'll want to have follow-up mammograms twice a year just to make sure," he said, "but..." His voice trailed off.

Seven years later, with no medical or surgical intervention, the cancer has not returned.

God's healing power will always be a mystery to me, a glorious mystery. But I know that he worked as great a miracle in my soul as he worked in my body. Through my faithful friend Wanda, he showed me that I am loved. Always. ©



For more of Roberta's stories, go to [guideposts.org/rmessner](http://guideposts.org/rmessner)



# Signed, Sealed and Delivered

Has the handwritten letter gone the way  
of the horse and buggy? Don't tell  
TV producer Martha Williamson that

By **MARTHA WILLIAMSON**

Los Angeles, California

**L**IKE MOST PEOPLE THESE DAYS, I can't imagine life without e-mail. Texting is even more convenient, especially since I have two teen daughters. But there's something about a letter, something more personal, more meaningful. It says that someone took time to put on paper what they felt. Sometimes people reveal something they might not have told you any other way, something that can touch your life forever.

Let me tell you about three letters that made a difference to me.

Freshman year of college I was struggling. I'd ventured far from home, from Colorado to Williams College in western Massachusetts. Williams was and still is one of the most academically challenging colleges in the country and looks like a movie set: ivy-covered

walls, Gothic columns, expansive green lawns in a charming village.

It seemed as though half my classmates had gone to boarding school. They'd already lived away from home and arrived on campus with an air of sophistication I couldn't match. (All I knew of preppies was from the movie *Love Story*.) I'd been named "Outstanding Senior" at Denver South High and was the editor of the school yearbook. I'd led my church youth group and won a prestigious scholarship. None of that seemed to count for much with my accomplished classmates.

But I loved to sing, and I was cast as the lead in the Freshman Revue. Finally something at college I could excel

**PEN TO PAPER** Martha's new TV show was inspired by letters from family and fans.

at! The rehearsals and performances didn't allow much time for studying, and then there were friends to make and parties to go to.

Despite my straight A average in high school, I didn't have good study habits. My first college report card proved it. I sat on my dorm-room bed, staring at C's and D's. I knew my parents had gotten a copy of my grades. My mother was an advocate for women's education and the treasurer of an international organization of university women. My dad ran his own business and was a pillar of the community. They'd been so proud I was following in their footsteps.

I could have called home, but long-distance calls were expensive then. Besides, telling my parents, "I couldn't cut it in college. I'm so sorry

I've disappointed you" hardly seemed attractive.

Mail was delivered to the student union, where every week I'd find waiting for me a thick packet of Denver news clippings from Mom with a "Daddy says hi" tacked on. I put off checking my mailbox but I couldn't avoid the student union forever. Finally I walked in and Mrs. Marlowe, who sorted our mail, announced, "You've got something." I peeked inside my mailbox. No clippings this time. A letter. Two letters.

I grabbed them and sat on a bench outside to read. My dad's letter was typed on his business stationery, onionskin paper that crinkled in my shaking hands. The keys on his old Smith Corona would strike the paper so hard that some letters were raised



MONTY BRINTON



like Braille and others made holes. I could see through the f's and the o's. I could hear his voice, quiet, firm, kind.

"I understand you are struggling. We have all been there," he wrote. *Dad, struggle?* He always seemed so confident! "We all fail sometimes. We disappoint ourselves. And our family. But those who deserve to be at the top, when they fail, get right back up to the top again. And I know you will." Then he quoted a Scripture: "From those to whom much is given, much is required."

I put down the letter, running my fingertips across the paper. Dad wasn't ashamed of me. He believed I could succeed. If only I could believe in myself as he did!

Then I opened the envelope from Mom, addressed in her generous, unmistakable hand. As I read, the miles between us disappeared and her words went straight to my heart.

"I suspect you are carrying burdens and feeling overwhelmed...perhaps you feel guilty about choices that you are not proud of...." I hadn't told her about the partying. She knew. "This is the time when everything we've taught you will kick in. Persistence. Forgiveness. Faith. Remember, you can tell us anything, but if you can't, there is always One you can go to."

I'd never heard Mom speak so personally about God. About *needing* him. She sang in our church choir and we said grace at dinner, but here, in this letter, she was sharing something much deeper. She was sharing her rela-

tionship with God. He wasn't someone I'd left behind when I came east for college. He was right here, ready to help. All I needed to do was talk to him.

I did, often. College got much better. My grades improved. I joined the Ephlats, an a cappella group that sang at dinners and concerts. I discovered a passion for writing. I also fell in love with a guy in the Ephlats. Steve was three years older, a smart, thoughtful scientist. I thought we were the perfect match, the soprano and tenor harmonizing together, happily ever after.

Steve graduated and went off to grad school at Cornell. Ithaca, New York, wasn't that far from Williamstown, Massachusetts. I figured I'd see him on weekends. But I didn't hear a word from him, not a call, not a letter. I took his silence to mean it was over between us. We'd had long conversations about what we believed, what we hoped to do in life. Had it been just some end-of-college fling for him?

I'd thought freshman year was rough. This was devastating. Now I dreaded going to the student union and seeing nothing more in my mailbox than the usual packets from Mom. *Please, Lord, I prayed, make this heartache go away.*

Then one day, Mrs. Marlowe, no doubt detecting my misery, said hopefully, "You've got something!"

I opened my box and took out a blue card. "Undeliverable. Postage due," it read. "What does this mean?" I asked.

"Someone's sent you something without enough postage. You've got to

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go to the post office in town and pay the balance to pick it up."

**M**OM PROBABLY FORGOT TO put enough stamps on her packet. It could wait. There was too much going on—classes, papers to write, concerts with the Ephlats, anything to distract me from my sadness. It wasn't until weeks later that I passed the post office and remembered the postage-due card in my bag.

I walked up the marble steps and handed the card to the clerk behind the counter. I paid 25 cents and was given a thick envelope. I recognized the handwriting immediately. Steve's.

I didn't even make it all the way down those marble steps. I just sat and read. It was a long letter, covering both sides of eight pages. No wonder it had arrived postage due! Steve wrote how challenging grad school was, how he missed me. Mostly he wrote about the talent he saw in me and how he cherished our relationship. "I would like to see you again. I'm hoping to visit campus on the weekend of..."

I almost screamed there on the post-office steps. He meant *this* weekend. Just a few days from now! He'd written weeks before and must have figured I'd given up on him. I dashed to a phone and called him, never mind the long-distance bill. "Of course I want to see you," I told him. And to this day, I will never forget seeing him standing at my door three days later.

No, I didn't marry Steve. You can't

always write the script for your life and expect everybody to play the parts that you want them to. But he ended up being a terrific friend. He encouraged me to pursue a career in television that led to producing and writing the hit show *Touched by an Angel*. Steve and I are still good friends and sing together with the Ephlats at reunions back at Williams. To think we might never have spoken again if he hadn't written that letter!

I could tell you about other letters, especially the inspiring mail I got from fans of *Touched by an Angel*. But it should be no surprise that I believe in the power of letters. You can hear someone very clearly through the written word. They might share the secrets of their faith or their heart. A letter can restore a relationship or change the world. Just think: Half the New Testament is made up of letters, mostly from Paul, but also from Peter, James, John and Jude. Letters are forever.

That's why I decided to write a new TV series about a team of lost-mail detectives who help reconnect the recipients and senders of undeliverable letters. *Signed, Sealed, Delivered* premiered this spring on the Hallmark channel; the pilot episode may even remind you of the love letter I almost didn't get. The message is simple and true: Letters can touch our lives in mysterious and unexpected ways. And even if they arrive late, sometimes they're delivered right on time after all. **G**

For more on this story, see **FAMILY ROOM**



# Speaking Out

*I am not a diabetic. I am a person with diabetes. I can never forget that. I can't let it define me either*

By **KELLY KUNIK**

Cherry Hill, New Jersey

**I** AM A PWD—A PERSON WITH DIABETES. PLEASE NOTE THAT the word *person* comes first. Dealing with being a PWD hasn't always been easy for me. And I know I'm not alone. That's why I'm doing all I can these days to dispel myths and misconceptions about diabetes. That's why I'm telling my story here.

My parents had six children and three of us had Type 1 diabetes. So did my dad. I was diagnosed in 1977 on—of all days—Halloween. My parents had brought me to the hospital because I'd been losing weight and incredibly thirsty for weeks. Instead of being a normal eight-year-old out trick-or-treating, I spent the evening receiving an insulin IV drip from a nurse dressed up as a clown.

"You don't know for sure that I even have diabetes," I challenged her. I mean, she was dressed like a clown! "Just let me go trick-or-treating and I promise I'll come back tomorrow."

"Oh, honey, you do have diabetes," she said, "and you'll be taking shots for the rest of your life." Right then, I knew two things for sure. This was the worst Halloween ever. And I hated clowns.

I put on a happy face for my parents even as I saw the sadness in their eyes. But alone at night in my hospital bed, I thought of giving up my beloved Reese's Peanut Butter Cups and felt the tears slide down my cheeks.

Soon I was back home and bringing needles to the dinner table so I could inject myself with insulin. Type 1 diabetes is an autoimmune disease. Basically, my immune system attacked my pancreas



JENNA STAMM

so that it was no longer able to produce the hormone insulin. Type 1's like me had no choice but to inject themselves with insulin to stay alive.

At school, I became the class cutup. I was *not* going to be known as the Girl With Diabetes. I'd sneak ■ Reese's Peanut Butter Cup, then ride my bike to the other side of Margate, our Jersey shore town, to bring my blood sugar down. These little escapes didn't change the truth. I never got ■ day off from diabetes. Every day was full of challenges, and too many times I felt like I was failing. I had a lot of diabetes guilt.

My sister Debbie understood. She was older than me by 14 years, but we'd both been diagnosed as kids. She'd battled more than diabetes; she was also ■ recovering alcoholic. Alcoholism and diabetes are a deadly combination. Her health had forced her to stop working and move back home.

Debbie was a beach girl, through and through. We'd swim and body-surf, letting the powerful waves carry us away—if only for a while—from the cares of life. We'd walk the beach, Debbie picking up shells. "Look how God has made each one unique, so beautiful in its own

**PERSONAL CRUSADE** From diabetes denial to advocacy



way," she'd say. "Isn't it amazing?" Sometimes, we'd see a rainbow arching across the sky. In those peaceful moments my heart overflowed with love for her.

**D**EBBIE KEPT GETTING SICKER. With the rest of my siblings out of the house, I helped my parents take care of her. Debbie suffered from brittle bones, heart attacks and strokes. I don't like to use the word *hate*, but I hated diabetes for what it was doing to my sister. Scared and angry, Debbie lashed out and I fought right back. I was angry too, angry at how diabetes was affecting my family, angry at what it might do to me. Sometimes in fits of anger, Debbie put into words my deepest fear: "You're going to end up just like me, Kelly, if you don't watch out. You'll be dead before you're forty."

I went to a local college, eager to be anything other than the Girl With Diabetes. I just wanted to be normal! So I'd binge on pizza with my friends or eat cookies while studying. I'd do the bare minimum to keep my diabetes from getting totally out of hand.

Debbie's condition deteriorated my sophomore year. During my winter break, she was admitted to the hospital. I visited her before a risky procedure to drain fluid from her lungs. She looked so *tired*.

I sat beside her and squeezed her hand. She asked me to sing "Over the Rainbow" with her. Her voice was barely a whisper.

"You need to take care of yourself, Kelly," she said, hugging me weakly. I clung to her. If only I could take her away from all this like the waves that used to carry us away toward that distant horizon, that rainbow. A few days later, my sister was gone, dead at 34.

Even though she'd been so sick for so long, it was hard to accept she'd actually died of diabetes. I didn't know how to cope with her death, and I was suffering from a serious case of diabetes burnout. I found myself not checking my blood sugar as often as I should have, which only made me feel more guilty. Deep down, I was terrified my sister's warning might come true.

That's why I made an appointment with a new endocrinologist, a doctor who specialized in diseases affecting glands, hormones and the endocrine system, including diabetes. *Has the damage already been done?* I wondered as I waited in the exam room. I found myself praying it wasn't too late. I didn't want to die like Debbie.

There was a knock and a tall man with a kind face strode in. "I've looked at your labs, Kelly, and you have some work to do, but I'm going to help you get things under control. We still can't cure Type 1 diabetes, but we've found better strategies for managing it." He told me about new ways to figure out how much insulin I needed.

I followed his advice. I checked my blood sugar regularly and learned how to count carbs and cover my meals with the correct amount of insulin. I started looking at my blood-sugar numbers not

in terms of success or failure but as tools to get me where I needed to be.

Suddenly I was the Model Patient. Still, for years I resisted getting an insulin pump—a small pager-like device that mimics your own pancreas by continually delivering insulin through an infusion site—even though my doctor insisted it was a total game-changer. I was in great shape and loved wearing tailored clothes. And bathing suits at the beach. I figured the pump would cramp my style.

"Just try it for a year, Kelly," my doctor implored.

All right. I'd give it a year.

All it took was a week. The pump used short-acting insulin, so I could eat when I wanted instead of at set times each day. I programmed it with my blood-sugar number and carb count and it delivered the amount of insulin I needed. A bit more work, yes, but it gave me a freedom I'd never known. Finally, I could reach what I called blood-sugar nirvana—the ability to take the right insulin dose to cover a special treat like a cupcake. Even the occasional Reese's.

I wanted every person living with diabetes to discover the freedom I had. I wanted to evangelize for the pump! I got involved with organizations serving the diabetes community. I became proud of owning my diabetes—instead of feeling it was owning me.

One night I saw a famous actress on TV talking about diabetes. She claimed that through lifestyle changes, she'd changed from having Type 1 diabetes to having Type 2 diabetes and didn't

have to take insulin anymore. "That's ridiculous, she was misdiagnosed in the first place!" I yelled at the screen. What she was saying didn't make sense medically and was totally dangerous.

There was so much misinformation out there! The kind that made people ask me things like whether I got Type 1 diabetes because my parents gave me too much sugar as a kid. (The answer, in case you were wondering, is *no*.)

**E**NOUGH WAS ENOUGH. ON AN impulse, I started a blog called *Diabetesaliciousness* on what living with diabetes is really all about. I talked about Debbie, which was liberating. People slowly began to comment on my posts and I drew a following. Blogging changed my life as much as the insulin pump did—which is saying something.

By reading other people's blogs, I discovered the diabetes online community, an amazing group of friends I could learn from and joke with about stuff like getting my insulin pump tubing caught on a doorknob (yes, that happens). People who "got it"—the guilt, the frustration, the anger. But also the joy and excitement of living really great lives with diabetes. Yes, I'm a PWD. I also happen to be a daughter, a sister, an aunt, a friend, an advocate and a lover of cupcakes.

On my fortieth birthday, I imagined Debbie smiling down on me as I blew out the candles. I imagined the pounding surf, a rainbow on the horizon. I imagined my big sister, proud of me. ©







# The Apple Tart Treatment

*My granddaughter Lily had 800 days of chemo ahead of her. Doctors were doing all they could. What could I do?*

By **CAROL SHAW JOHNSTON**

Franklin, Tennessee

**L**ILY, MY SEVEN-YEAR-OLD GRANDdaughter, lay in her hospital bed, knees drawn up to her chest, her body coiled in pain. "It feels like my back is broken," she whispered. Her mama sat by her side, stroking her face. I hovered, wishing there was something more I could do besides worry.

A few days earlier, Lily had been diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia. The doctors had outlined an extensive treatment plan and given pages and pages of recommendations, descriptions of the powerful drugs that would be used during chemotherapy, their side effects, advice on how to best cope with pain and nausea. The information filled a heavy blue binder that sat next to her bed. Poor Lily. Even if

everything went well, she had a long, hard road ahead—more than 800 days of chemo treatments. Nearly two and a half years! An eternity for a kid.

I was used to being Grandma Carol, the lady with all the answers. But now all I had were questions. How sick would the treatments make Lily? What would she be able to eat? How much school would she miss? How would she react to losing her hair? What about Sophie, her five-year-old sister? She'd be scared...how would I comfort her? How could I possibly make any of this better? That was the one I couldn't get past.

It was hard to believe that just a month before, our lives had been so normal. Lily and Sophie spent a lot of time with their PaPaw and me. Doing cartwheels in our front yard. Telling

jokes to their PaPaw. Making up songs and putting on plays. And helping me cook—that was their favorite.

I'd taught the girls how to make pasta, chili, chocolate-chip cookies and ice cream. Our signature recipe, though, was apple tarts. The last time we'd made them, Lily had been in charge of the cinnamon. She'd sprinkled it into the mixing bowl like it was pixie dust!

"Don't you think that's enough cinnamon, sweetheart?" I'd said.

Fine brown powder covered her face and hands—the kitchen counter too. The girls giggled, then added an extra dash or two more. I was sure the tarts were ruined. But it turned out to be the best batch we'd ever made. "It's because of the cinnamon," Lily said,

**CINNAMON GIRLS** Carol with her kitchen helpers, her granddaughters Sophie and Lily

her eyes twinkling mischievously. That was Lily—full of sparkle and spunk.

It broke my heart to see her now, wan and hooked up to an octopus of tubes and machines.

Visiting hours ended. I kissed Lily good-night and drove home, pleading with God the whole way.

*Please, dear God, make the next eight hundred days go by quickly. Let this nightmare be over.*

The strangest thought popped into my head. It didn't come from me. It was like someone else had spoken. *Don't wish this time away. Savor it.*

Savor it? How could I savor my

PHOTOS BY TAMARA REYNOLDS







granddaughter's suffering? I wanted to shoo the darkness away, not embrace it. And yet the voice persisted. *Savor it.* It sounded like something my mom used to tell me when I was a teenager: "Carol, don't rush your life. Live in the moment, in the present!"

Maybe Mom was right. This time, this chance to be with Lily, was more precious than ever, now that we weren't sure what the future would bring. Lily and Sophie deserved a childhood beyond stark hospital rooms and grueling treatments. I would try, the best I could, to make the next 800 days a little bit brighter, one day at a time.

**SPECIAL DELIVERY** Lily got her spark back thanks in part to Grandma Carol's Café.

The next morning, as I scrambled eggs for my husband and me, I had an idea: Grandma Carol's Café, a full-service diner for two very special customers. I made out menus for breakfast, lunch, dinner and, of course, dessert. At the top I wrote, "Open 24 hours a day for Lily and Sophie."

I took the menus with me when I went to the hospital and gave them to the girls. "Anytime you're sick of hospital food, just call in your order. I'll bring it right over."

Lily smiled weakly.

A few days later the phone rang. "Hello," I heard a small, soft voice say. It was Lily. "We'd like to place an order for lunch."

"Yes, ma'am," I said. "What can I get for y'all?"

"We'll have the chicken nuggets, mashed potatoes, black-eyed peas and—oh!—apple tarts, please. Don't forget the extra cinnamon!"

"You got it," I said. "Your order's on its way!"

I got to work. Chopping, whisking, baking. When it was time to make the apple tarts, I sprinkled in lots and lots of cinnamon. Then I packed everything up in a picnic basket and took it to the hospital.

"Special delivery!" I announced, walking into Lily's room on the sixth floor. The girls' eyes lit up. I spread out a picnic blanket on the floor and we feasted. In that hour, it didn't matter

that Lily was battling leukemia or that she had an IV hanging out of her chest. The three of us chatted about school, their bulldog and the TV movie *High School Musical*, just like old times.

"Thanks, Grandma Carol," Lily said. "That was great." But minutes later she was sick. After the nurse had come and gone, Lily-slumped against the pillow, all the color drained from her face. And here I'd thought I was brightening her day. I drove home feeling lower than ever.

Lily was fighting for her life. Did I really think apple tarts would solve anything? But I couldn't give up. Her

parents and her doctors had the big stuff covered. Maybe there were other little things I could try.

I knew Lily missed school more than anything. Her teachers had arranged for her classmates to write her some get-well-soon cards. I put in a special request for funny stories and jokes too. Lily, Sophie and I would read the notes aloud and crack up. Not only did those visits cheer Lily up, they also gave her mama a much-needed break from the hospital.

Lily couldn't leave her hospital room. Her low blood counts made her vulnerable to germs. So I scoured the

## Apple Tarts

Sweet and sooo delicious!

5	medium to large apples (a mixture is best: honeycrisp, Granny Smith, gala, delicious)
1/2	cup sugar
1/4	cup light brown sugar
1	tablespoon cornstarch
2	teaspoons ground cinnamon
1/8	teaspoon salt
1	package ready-made or 1 batch homemade piecrust
1	egg (optional)



To find this recipe's nutritional info,  
go to [guideposts.org/appletarts](http://guideposts.org/appletarts)

**P**eel apples and cut into thin slices. Put in a large bowl. Combine sugar, brown sugar, cornstarch, cinnamon and salt, and sprinkle over apples. Toss to coat evenly. Cover bowl and let sit about an hour, to draw liquid from apples. Preheat oven to 350°F. Place apples in a saucepan, bring just to a boil (add a little apple juice if apples are too dry), then reduce heat and simmer 10-15 minutes, stirring frequently. (Or you can place in microwave-safe dish and heat for about 8 minutes, stirring every couple of minutes.) Cool completely. Line eight 4-inch tart pans with piecrust. Use a cookie cutter to cut shapes out of leftover dough for top crust. Spoon apple mixture into crust-lined pans, topping with dough shape. If desired, use an egg wash of 1 egg beaten with 1 tablespoon of water to lightly brush tops of crusts. Bake 25-30 minutes or until crust is golden brown. **Makes 8 tarts.**



## CAREGIVERS

aisles at the craft store, then showed up in Lily's room armed with cabin-fever-fighting activities. We beaded bracelets. Lots of them. Played round after round of Yahtzee Turbo. I did bedside manicures and pedicures that were the envy of the entire sixth floor. Designed *Final Spinal* T-shirts for her last spinal chemo treatment. Helped her with homework so she wouldn't fall behind. And at Lily's request, had more picnics with food from Grandma Carol's Café, with extra helpings of apple tarts. The doctors and nurses developed a taste for the cinnamon treats too!

One night, the entire family put on a musical in Lily's room. Lily wasn't ready to return to the stage just yet, so she took on her favorite role—

director. Even her PaPaw got in on the act and did a goofy dance. We raised such a ruckus that the on-call nurses poked their heads in. "Is everything okay?" they asked.

"Couldn't be better," Lily said, laughing, that sparkle in her eye once again. Maybe the crafts and manicures and apple tarts didn't cure her or take away the pain. But they'd given her a different kind of strength, a strength of spirit.

Today Lily is in remission, finishing up seventh grade with her trademark pizzazz. Playing volleyball and performing in school plays. Savoring every moment. Just as I learned to do during those 800 days of treatment. ©

For more on this story, see **FAMILY ROOM**

## Credit Card Debt? Solutions that can help you get out of debt.

Tom Hill  
CGA STAFF WRITER

Every three minutes another person falls behind on credit card debt. It's no wonder, since every major credit card company has nearly doubled the minimum monthly payment on consumers' bills. Federal Regulators forced the change because of their concern about the growing mountain of consumer debt, which stands at \$2.17 trillion. Many consumers can only pay the minimum payment, which can take up to 30 years to pay off. Now, relief is in sight for millions of Americans.

**CreditGUARD of America**, a non-profit licensed debt management service provider, is making a new program available to lower debt payments and become free of all credit card debt in only three to five years. Consumers need only \$2,000 or more in total credit card debt and behind on any account, to cut their payment by 35% to 50%, and reduce or eliminate interest charges altogether.

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Certified Credit Counselors at **CreditGUARD of America** provide Debt Relief Consultations at no charge, when you call 1-800-564-7307. Calculate your interest rate savings instantly online when you visit their website at: [www.creditguard.org/gp](http://www.creditguard.org/gp)

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your gracious love  
in all we say  
and do."*

**JENNIE IVEY**

Cookeville, Tennessee



## Summer Spaghetti

*Perfect for a hot, lazy day.*

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 3 | large tomatoes,<br>chopped, juices<br>reserved      |
| ¾ | pound fresh<br>mozzarella, cut into<br>½-inch cubes |
| 1 | cup kalamata olives,<br>pitted and chopped          |
| 3 | cloves garlic, minced                               |
|   | Large handful basil<br>leaves, roughly torn         |
| ½ | cup olive oil, plus<br>extra, if needed             |
|   | Salt and pepper                                     |
| 1 | pound spaghetti                                     |

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**B**ring large pot of water to a boil over high heat. Meanwhile, combine tomatoes and their juices, mozzarella, olives, garlic, basil and oil in a large bowl. Salt generously, add some pepper, and set aside. When water boils, salt generously. When it returns to a boil, add pasta, quickly stir to separate noodles, then cover. Uncover when water returns to a boil, then cook pasta al dente, stirring occasionally. Drain pasta and pour on top of tomato mixture. Toss to combine after mixture warms. There should be enough liquid to coat pasta and form a puddle at the bottom of the bowl. If not, add a little more oil. Check seasonings. Divide pasta among shallow bowls, breaking up any large clumps of cheese with your fingers. Top with juices at bottom of bowl. **Serves 4-6.**

Reprinted from *Keepers*, by Kathy Brennan and Caroline Campion (Rodale Books).





## FAMILY ROOM

MEET THE PEOPLE IN OUR PAGES

**L**ily came up with the idea of raising one hundred dollars for children's cancer research...but she kept going!" says **Carol Shaw Johnston** (*The Apple Tart Treatment*, page 66) about her granddaughter, who fought leukemia five years ago. Lily's new goal is one million dollars—and she's getting close. Her nonprofit organization, Lily's Garden Foundation, has raised \$850,000 for the Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt University, where she was treated. In September, Childhood Cancer Awareness Month, Lily and her family set up a Lily's Garden booth at the Franklin 4 the Cure marathon in Tennessee. "Lily planted flowers with kids and talked to them about her experiences with cancer and the need for more research," says Carol. "Her dream is to become a pediatric oncology nurse." Learn more about the Lily's Garden Foundation at [lilysgarden.org](http://lilysgarden.org).



**JOHNSTON** Carol with granddaughters Sophie, Lily and Evey



**LETHBRIDGE** Globe-trotter

**A**ubrey Lethbridge (*The Liberian Lone Stars*, page 22) has always been a bit of a globe-trotter. He lived in Japan as an exchange student; graduated from the University of Glasgow in Scotland; and traveled to Liberia to make his film *We Stand Alone*, about the country's amputee soccer team. "I'm really fortunate—my parents wanted me to be open to the world," he says. Now his film is traveling the

globe. In June 2013 *We Stand Alone* was screened at the Pineapple Underground Film Festival in Hong Kong. Earlier this year it was a semifinalist in the Central Florida Christian Film Festival. To find out when *We Stand Alone* will be playing near you, visit [westandalone-movie.com](http://westandalone-movie.com).

**I**t's an old-fashioned romance that celebrates the written word and the thoughtfully composed letter," says **Martha Williamson** (page 56) of her new show, *Signed, Sealed, Delivered*, which debuted on Easter on the Hallmark Channel and runs through June. It airs on Sunday nights, in the



**WILLIAMSON** Martha and Della Reese, a guest star on *Signed, Sealed, Delivered*

same time slot as *Touched by an Angel*. It's set in Martha's hometown, Denver, and follows four dead-letter detectives as they track down the intended recipients of undeliverable mail. "I grew up a block from Washington Park in Denver, where a great deal of the story takes place," says Martha. Her Colorado community stepped up in a big way last summer. Martha was filming the pilot in Vancouver while her husband, Jon Anderson, was at their cabin outside Denver. They were talking on the phone when Jon started slurring his words. Something was terribly wrong. Martha went to her computer,



**HENLINE** Bobby, the comedy warrior

pulled up a newsletter that listed the e-mail addresses of other cabin owners and sent them an e-mail with the subject line "Emergency! I'm worried Jon is having a stroke!" Within minutes, their neighbors got Jon to the hospital. "It was miraculous," Martha says. "They saved his life!"

**C**omedian and Army veteran **Bobby Henline** (*From the Inside*, page 36) stars in *Coming Back With Wes Moore*, a three-part PBS series airing in May that follows veterans as they reintegrate with society. "I think viewers will get a better understanding of combat stress and PTSD, and how they affect families," says Bobby. "What's great is that you hear so many viewpoints." Bobby's also part of a more lighthearted documentary called *Comedy Warriors: Healing Through Humor*. He and four other wounded veterans perform stand-up

TOP: TAMARA REYNOLDS; BOTTOM: JORDAN HOLLENDER  
TOP: ROBERT SEALE; BOTTOM LEFT: KATIE YU, HALLMARK



## FAMILY ROOM

comedy and receive coaching from B. J. Novak, Bob Saget and other stars, then take the stage at the Improv in Los Angeles. "I hope a lot of veterans hear about us," Bobby says, "so we can help the thousands who are struggling." Visit [comedywarriors.com](http://comedywarriors.com) for more info and to order the DVDs.

**A**fter a long winter of record-setting snowfall and low temperatures, Senior Editor

## Guideposts Outreach



"Our son was a little frightened and tearful coming out of anesthesia after surgery. When he opened his Guideposts Comfort Kit and saw Sparkle, the stuffed star, he cheered right up. Thank you so much for sharing these!"

**REBECCA CLEMENT**  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

For more information on our outreach programs, visit [guidepostsfoundation.org](http://guidepostsfoundation.org), write to **GUIDEPOSTS FOUNDATION**, 39 Old Ridgebury Road, Suite 2AB, Danbury, CT 06810, or e-mail us at [outreach@guideposts.org](mailto:outreach@guideposts.org).



**PARTON** Dolly, still creatin' and dreamin'

Celeste McCauley happily escaped to Dollywood in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, to interview living legend **Dolly Parton** (*Dolly's Dreams*, page 32). "Dolly's like a breath of spring air," says Celeste. The singer, songwriter and actress even had her creative director, Steve Summers, make her a special dress just for the GUIDEPOSTS photo shoot. Dolly is currently on a world tour promoting her new album, *Blue Smoke*. She says the album features "all the colors of my life in all the areas of music I've been able to dabble in throughout the years." For the latest on Dolly's concert tour and upcoming projects, go to [dollyparton.com](http://dollyparton.com).

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## CONTINUED

HOW A STORY MADE A DIFFERENCE

### STATES OF GRACE

**D**octors diagnosed my son Matthew's heart defect in utero. He had life-saving surgery shortly after birth. But as I shared in *A Hopeful Heart* (January 2013), I learned that many parents don't find out their



babies have a heart abnormality until too late, because few hospitals screen for them.

Less than a month after my story came out, I got a call from State Representative Bernard Ayotte of Maine. "I read your article," he said, "and I'd like to make pulse oximetry screening mandatory in our state. Can you help?"

Pulse oximetry is a simple test that can detect heart problems in newborns. I sent Bernard information and got him connected to a local advocate. In June 2013, the bill passed unanimously. A month after that, New York came on board.

State by state, babies are getting a better chance at healthy lives. Thanks for running my story and giving me an opportunity to inspire others to take action.

**MARIE HATCHER**  
Sherman, Connecticut

### UNEXPECTED REUNION

**W**riting *My Unexpected Grandmother* (March 2014), about my foster dad's glamorous mother, Mary Frances, made me long for her all over again. My son posted about my search on his social-media accounts and managed to find her daughter.



I had a wonderful conversation with Mary Frances on Christmas Eve. She had just celebrated turning 97, and sounded as vibrant as the summer I lived with her. It's a special person who takes in and helps other people's children—I'm so grateful Mary Frances is that kind of person. She truly changed my life.

**CAROLYN GRAHAM**  
Vidor, Texas



### FROM OUR FACEBOOK FANS

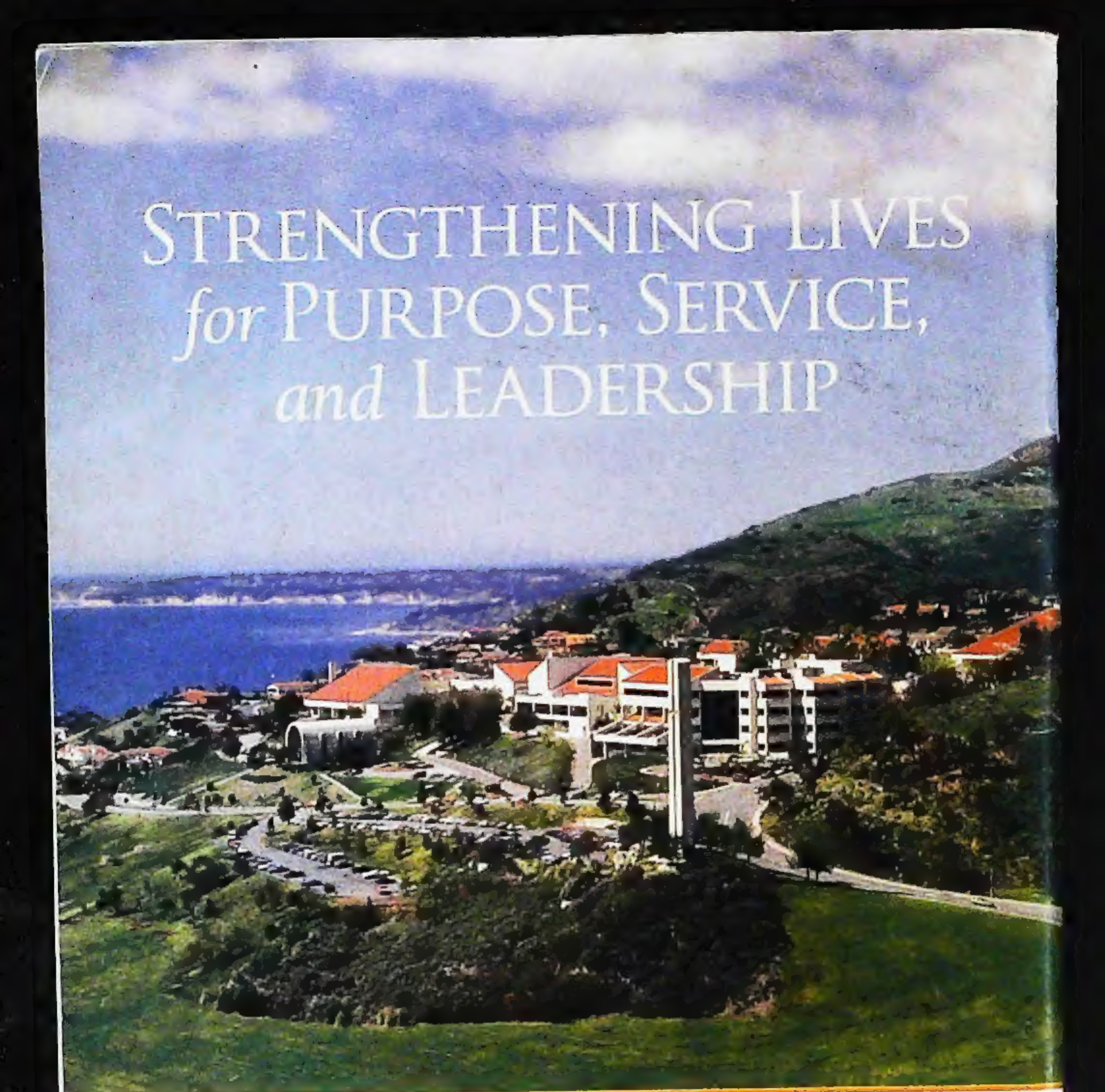
**KEVIN RYAN:** It was cool getting to know Olympian Katie Uhlaender (*Racer's Edge*, February 2014) through GUIDEPOSTS. I'm glad to have read such an inspiring story of a father and daughter's love.



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An aerial photograph of the Pepperdine University campus, showing various buildings with red-tiled roofs, a large parking lot, and surrounding green hills and a blue body of water in the background.

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